

CITYWISE

NOTTINGHAM'S ALTERNATIVE PAPER

INSIDE:

Abortion:

Meeting women's needs

Ken Coates on the Media

Local Democracy supplement

Events Listings

NOTTINGHAM

TO

NICARAGUA



Photo: Wilson/Isthmus



NOTTINGHAM'S
ALTERNATIVE
PAPER NEEDS YOU!!

**Buy it! And get your friends to !*

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**Use it! Tell us about your meetings, campaigns, demonstrations, publications, performances, exhibitions (deadline for next issue: 20th April).*

**Keep us informed! Stories, leads, rumours - anything you think needs exposing or investigating.*

**Join us! Writing, research, illustrations, typing, layout, collation, distribution, accounts, office work. Even a couple of hours an issue would help.*

**Give us financial support! We need about £200 an issue. Make a donation. Ask your group or union branch to make a donation (cheques to "Citywise", address below). Give regularly if you can. Fill in the bankers' order. As little as £1.00 a month would help.*

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● Mail for Citywise can be sent or handed in to our mail-only address: Citywise, Box B Mushroom, 10 Heathcote Street, Nottingham NG1 3AA.

● 'Phone messages should go direct to Citywise on Nottingham 864655 (contact for this issue only).

NEXT ISSUE

April 28th

OPEN MEETING

7.30 p.m.

27th March

T & GWU

259 Mansfield Road

The Citywise alternative

CITYWISE is Nottingham's alternative paper - alternative to the established media and the established views they present.

Our pages are open particularly to groups whose access to the conventional media is limited, such as women's groups, black groups, trade unions, the peace movement, gay groups, environmental groups, and tenants' associations and other community groups.

Our guiding principle is that self-determination and freedom from oppression and exploitation are everyone's right, and that concentrations of wealth and power are its chief enemies.

Within this framework, we cover the widest variety of action and opinion. Where possible, groups and individuals are asked to speak for themselves, and editing is kept to a minimum. However, we reserve the

right to reject or amend anything libellous, racist, sexist or inaccurate, and to edit down articles which are too long. Contributors should give an address and, if possible, a 'phone number, so we may consult them about alterations.

We prefer articles to be signed (by an individual or group), though we accept that sometimes there are good reasons not to.

We ask contributors to check their facts carefully. We also ask readers to let us know if they find inaccuracies - we prefer to get things right, and we are always willing to publish corrections.

Citywise is run collectively and informally. New people are always welcome, though of course they should be in sympathy with our aims. Readers are invited to our open meetings, announced in each issue. ●

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Citywise will appear 8 times a year initially (later, we hope to go monthly). We'd like you to subscribe £3.25, which will bring you the next 8 issues by post (extra donations are welcome!). *Special offer!* Subscribe now, and if you missed the last two issues, we'll send them to you free!

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Nottingham demonstrators quick off the mark Instant response to Cruise

By Ross Bradshaw

ON THE DAY Cruise first poked its head out of Greenham . . . by early afternoon, Beeston Mothers Against Cruise had organised a small demonstration in Beeston . . . by mid-afternoon, a 'peace camp' was set up by Women for Peace on a roundabout on Maid Marian Way . . . by late afternoon, the forces recruitment office in Milton Street was taken over by a CND direct action group . . . by tea-time, several hundred CND supporters were gathered in the Old Market Square.

Activated by a telephone-tree, local CND groups turned out an astonishing number of people in protest against Cruise and in support of the Greenham Women. The Square was taken up - despite a 'you can't do that' phonecall from the City Council to CND - with groups leafleting and singing. After walking round the Square a time or two, people formed up and walked to the recruitment centre to support those in occupation. For once, a demonstration did not keep to a police-approved route and simply set off to Milton Street without police permission, stopping oncoming traffic and reclaiming the roadway.

At the recruitment centre, people sang and chanted - especial thanks to the Women for Peace singers and Martin Harvey on megaphone for keeping the gathering lively. At 6.30, the occupiers left the recruitment office - there were no arrests and none were possible with hundreds of people in support.

Chilwell - watch out! ●



CND CLEAN UP - BUT POSTER STAYS

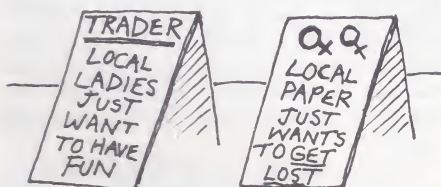
PERHAPS THE NICEST thing about the CND occupation of the forces recruitment centre on March 9th was the refusal of the centre staff to let the occupation end until the protesters cleaned up the confetti and other bits of rubbish they'd managed to strew.

Out came the hoovers and the, by no means unsympathetic, staff could watch CND making the centre spick and span. Incidentally, the doorway of the centre sported a lovely anti-arms trade poster stuck to the inside and clearly visible to passers-by for two days after the occupiers left. ●

Trader follows the Sun

CONGRATULATIONS to Loz Hatton and all at the *Trader*. In one small report (on March 7th), the paper succeeded in alienating every feminist in the city with its treatment of the Women's Festival.

Under the super soar-away Sun style heading, "Oh, girls just want to have fun", the article went on to describe how "Nottingham men are being left out in the cold for a whole month - while 'Er Indoors has a non-stop rave up". The "local ladies" and "women's libbers" (as the *Trader* so neatly puts it) involved in the Festival were mortified. Is Loz after a job on the *Sun*? Only asking.



Snooper at Citywise - council orders probe

By a *Citywise* Reporter

THE COUNTY COUNCIL is to hold an internal inquiry into why a County Hall official hired a private detective to find out who published the first issue of *Citywise* last November.

According to Labour Party sources, the private detective was employed because two members of the council's ruling Labour group took exception to an article about the use of firearms by the Notts. police. The two councillors have insisted on remaining anonymous.

The inquiry was announced by council leader Dennis Pettitt after Deputy Chief Executive Michael Suter confirmed to Radio Nottingham that he had authorised the investigation and only informed councillors afterwards.

However, Cllr Pettitt and Cllr Frank Taylor, Chairman of the Police Committee, told Radio Nottingham they knew nothing about it. Cllr Pettitt agreed that councillors should have been informed first, and told the Radio Nottingham reporter: "If you give

me some facts, I'll have them checked out to find out what the hell's going on."

The affair first came to light when the private detective, ex chief inspector of police Geoffrey Broadhead, approached *Citywise*'s printers, Bromar Press, and asked questions about the partners in the Press. After revealing that he had been sent by the County Council, Mr Broadhead was told to leave.

Bromar Press 'phoned County Hall to ask why they were being investigated but, despite numerous calls over several days, got no satisfaction apart from confirmation that Mr Broadhead *had* been sent by the County Council.

There was nothing at this stage to link Mr Broadhead's inquiries with *Citywise*. This only emerged after the case was taken up by the *Nottingham Trader* and BBC Radio Nottingham, when Mr Suter confirmed the connection.

The *Citywise* collective has now written to Mr Suter's superior, Chief Executive Arthur Sandford, suggesting that any objections to the article should have been sent direct to

the address given in the magazine. The letter points out that a complaint from the chairperson of the Nottingham Community Relations Council about another article was published in the next issue.

Mr Sandford has written back defending the use of a private detective and asking for the names and current address of the publishers of the November issue of *Citywise*.

Citywise has not yet been told why the article on the police caused so much offence, nor why the council still wants to know who published it.

However, at a full County Council meeting in December, the Chairman of the Police Committee, while not answering any of the specific points in the article, said that he deplored "these unfair and anonymous attacks" and was "currently discussing these allegations with the Chief Constable and the Clerk to the Police Authority in order to determine how best they might be dealt with".

According to Radio Nottingham, Cllr Pettitt and Mr Suter are now on record as considering the article "scurrilous". ●

Militant gets in on the act

YOU HAVE TO HAND it to *Militant* - they deserve full marks for trying. Central TV was recently filming a mock demo in Nottingham for a new comedy series about an imaginary trade union called *The Tolpuddle Inheritance*. Suddenly, out of nowhere and completely unscripted, there appears a *Militant* seller who promptly tries to flog copies of the paper to the somewhat surprised placard-holding actors and actresses. (From *Tribune*, Feb. 17th). ●

Bike boost for city cyclists

By Jon Brain

NOTTINGHAM HAS been chosen as part of a Government scheme aimed at developing a network of urban cycle routes.

The announcement, made by Transport Minister Lynda Chalker, comes two years after the Department of Transport gave the project the go-ahead.

Nottingham is one of five cities which will receive government funding for the creation of easier and safer routes for cyclists.

Full details have yet to be released but it is understood that four new cycle paths will be created, probably based in the Beeston area.

'Pedals', the campaign for safer cycling, has welcomed the announcement as 'a tremendous boost for the Bike City'.

Department of Transport officials will be monitoring the scheme with a view to extending it nationwide. ●

Dimbleby dispute - local journalists speak out

By Jon Brain

LOCAL JOURNALISTS have welcomed the Labour Party's decision to black broadcaster David Dimbleby - but they say they are saddened by the refusal of their NUJ colleagues at the BBC to do likewise.

Neil Kinnock, Roy Hattersley and Len Murray have refused to appear on this month's budget-day TV special which Dimbleby has been chosen to present.

Their action is in support of the NUJ, which is in dispute with Dimbleby over his decision to print his four West London newspapers at Nottingham's TBF (Printers).

The TBF group of companies incurred the wrath of British journalists in 1978 when 28 reporters on the *Nottingham Evening Post* were fired for taking part in the nationwide provincial journalists' strike.

The company has been in conflict with the NUJ ever since and now relies exclusively on non-union labour.

But, although the NUJ executive has ordered a boycott of Dimbleby's budget broadcast, journalists at the BBC's Lime Grove current affairs chapel have voted to defy their leaders and will work alongside the controversial presenter.

Their decision has angered Nottingham reporters.

"I am pleased at the Labour Party step

but would have thought that Dimbleby's colleagues would have similarly supported their union by refusing to work with him," said Terry Wooton, one of the 28 sacked by the *Post* six years ago.

"The fact that he has been dealing with TBF shows that he is prepared to ride roughshod over the views of others. I am surprised and sorry that the Lime Grove workers should allow him to get away with it'.

The Lime Grove chapel has condemned Dimbleby but has refused to boycott him because the 1980 employment law makes such action illegal.

The NUJ is in dispute with TBF (Publishers) which is legally a separate company from TBF (Printers), which Dimbleby is using, and any action against the latter is therefore considered to be unlawful secondary picketing.

But the Provincial Newspapers Industrial Convenor, Alan Lees, says the distinction is an artificial one.

"Dimbleby was well aware of the feelings against TBF. He could have taken his printing to another non-union firm and have avoided conflict with the NUJ.

"Instead, he put it in the hands of the one organisation whose name is anathema to journalists in this country. We deplore his action and call on the Lime Grove chapel to refuse to work with him." ●

Campus nasties - bricks fly

By Graham Banks

THINGS REALLY ARE getting outta control at the University. After so many years impersonating a graveyard, the campus seems to be livening up.

James Archer, who contested the recent Students Union election as a Socialist Workers Party candidate, has been telling *Citywise* of a campaign of harassment against him.

The trouble started soon after the visit of the South African Ambassador to the University last November. James ended up with most of the blame/credit for the demonstration against the visit, and, a few days later, taxis and the gas and electricity boards turned up at his house, ordered in his name.

This sort of thing can easily be dismissed as a typically brainless student jape - however, things took a nastier turn during the presidential elections, when leaflets appeared attacking James: a picture of a noose with the captions "Swing 'em", "Socialist Wankers candidate" and "A worker like this doesn't deserve to live, let alone become union president". On one Saturday night during elections, red ink and glue were poured on to his car windscreen.

After heckling at a Conservative Students'

organised meeting addressed by Enoch Powell, James answered his front door at four in the morning to be confronted by an undertaker with hearse who had come to collect his dead body.

The incident was reported to the police, who found out from the fire brigade and the funeral directors that the caller in both cases had spoken with a soft Irish accent. They then interviewed two hard-line Tory activists at the University, involved in anti-NUS, Peace Through Strength and Ulster Unionist activities. One of them had been a member of a cadet-type loyalist organisation in Ireland and had admitted producing one of the earlier leaflets against James.

The police say the two had good alibis - they were with the Tory students at the annual dinner and went back to campus on the coach.

James points out, however, that it would be possible to travel to campus on the coach at 2.00 a.m. and walk back to his home in Lenton by ten to three. He says six people, not involved in politics, are suffering because the landlord refuses to fix the window, claiming it has nothing to do with him.

"Every time the Tories have had trouble at the University, there have been immediate reprisals," added James. ●

Moderation at GCHQ demo

By Bob Blatchford

THE 'MODERATE EAST Midlanders' of Nottingham (*sic* - Evening Post) turned up in their hundreds at mid-day on Tuesday 28 February to demonstrate their support for the beleaguered workers of GCHQ.

Just 4 days after the Council of Civil Service Unions had responded to the TUC call for action, factories and offices emptied to bring nearly 1000 trade unionists to the Market Square. Public and private sector workers gathered to hear speakers from NALGO, NUPE, CPSA, TASS, Regional TUC, the Hosiery Workers, Notts. County Council and Nottingham Centre for the Unemployed. Disruption was also reported at Raleigh and Plessey, and many civil servants stayed out all day.

Union banners and slogans bobbed above the heads of the crowd, one carrying a picture of Geoffrey Howe with the legend "Wanted for Bribery and Threats. Reward £1000."

It was useful having the banners to read, since the PA system left much to be desired. When the City Council agreed to the square being used, it insisted on 'hand-held amplification' only. The authority for this condition is the 1974 Control of Pollution Act (although it has been known for high-powered PA systems to be authorised for use on the Square when the City Council has sponsored events in the Nottingham Festival. What price priorities?).

Speakers lambasted the Tory party for its direct assault on the trade union movement and its bare-faced cheek in questioning the integrity of union members. More than one recalled that it was not trade unionists but Cambridge University which had produced the most celebrated security disasters of recent years.

As the traffic droned around the square and conspired with the chiming of the Council House clock to make listening difficult, one speaker remarked that despite the turn out we still hadn't stopped the buses or brought the city to a halt. Later that day we heard that trade unionists in Liverpool had done just that.

Unless the TUC caves in to the government's ideological, anti-union policies there will be a next time for the 'moderate East Midlanders' of Nottingham to emulate their sisters and brothers in Liverpool. ●



Photo: Mark Salmon

More fun at US base 103

By Jill and Di,
for Nottingham Women for Peace

FEBRUARY 29TH WAS a national day of women's action, based on the tradition of women proposing to men on this day. Nottingham Women for Peace decided to propose peace. The theme of the actions all over the country was the 'Essential Service Route' plans made by the Government which, in the event of a nuclear alert, would render most roads inaccessible to the public.

At 8am, about 30 women arrived at the main gate of USAF Chilwell, and were soon joined by several women from Beeston 'Mums against the Bomb'. We maintained a presence there for over two hours, with banners, placards and leaflets. We sang and drank coffee to keep warm (thanks to the friendly local milkman who donated milk for our coffee!).

Although the situation was similar to a picket line, we instinctively rejected that ethos, as a women's group, and were content to be visible and to talk to the people entering the base. MOD police stayed at the gate and didn't try to move us.

At 9.15, eight of us decided to enter the base on the other side by climbing over a broken fence. We set up a lovely breakfast picnic and shared coffee, sandwiches and muesli. After five minutes, two MOD police arrived and asked us to leave. They turned out to be quite sympathetic, and we chatted for a further 10 minutes before their superior officer arrived and was less pleasant about asking us to go. We finished breakfast and left, whilst being filmed by Central TV.

As soon as we left Chilwell, most women went straight into the city centre to set up an information stall on St. Peter's Gate. An enormous mushroom cloud behind the stall attracted a lot of attention, and we were given a number of donations for the

Greenham women. The stall ran from 11am to 3pm, and after all this we assembled on Mansfield Road at 4.45 for the final action in a very busy day. This action was to highlight the E.S.R. theme and to draw to the attention of commuters that in an emergency this road would be closed to them, and they would be trapped in the city centre. Our placards pointed out that virtually the only people who would be permitted to use the roads would be the military and civic officials and dignitaries - the majority of these being male. People in cars and buses read our placards, and we saw several discussions and arguments start.

We were dressed in black, and while half of us lined the roadside, the others crossed at the traffic lights each time the green person showed. The group swelled rapidly as women left work and joined us, and as darkness fell we lit candles and sang. It was a very impressive sight.

Throughout the day, media coverage was excellent, and local radio used our press releases, and also interviewed several women.

As we dispersed at 6 p.m., I felt good, but sad. Each separate action had worked well. We had made an impact, made ourselves visible and accessible, with no arrests. I felt sad because one woman was appearing at Newbury Court the next day, and may well go to prison.

The struggle goes on. Americans have leased land at Chilwell as their support system on this small island. Maybe some extra SS20s have been targeted on Nottinghamshire now, but Nottingham Women for Peace grows in strength and numbers. In one day we had communicated our fears to workers at Chilwell, lunchtime shoppers, and commuters - not a bad achievement. Thanks to all the women whose efforts made the day such a success. ●

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As investigated by the County
Council

Tel. 590238

Boots alarm - council keeps mum

By a Citywise Reporter

THERE IS GROWING concern among local residents and environmental groups over the development of Boots' research laboratories in Sneinton. Requests for information on discharges of chemical and radioactive substances from the Pennyfoot Street site have met with a muted response.

Plans to erect a new chemical research building and to extend the biological research facilities were set in motion when the firm was awarded planning permission in June last year. Permission was granted by the City Council's Planning Committee despite receiving forty letters and a petition with more than 1400 signatures opposing the scheme.

According to the planning application, waste in the form of gases and fumes from the chemical research building will pass into the atmosphere through a number of chimneys. The Planning Committee have requested that Boots themselves monitor the emissions and make the results available to the City Council. Certain chemical materials will also be discharged to the drains, which the Severn Trent Water Authority is prepared to accept.

Research in the biology building, which is used to test new drugs, involves the use of radio-isotopes in experiments with animals. The refurbishment of the building includes the installation of a new incinerator 'to combust various types of waste including low-level radioactive waste'. This will result in the emission of radioactive waste into the atmosphere. Other radioactive materials are discharged into the drains or transported by road to other disposal sites. There is no specific reference in the City Planning Officer's report to the monitoring of emissions from this building.

The Sneinton Environmental Society

LET ME ASSURE YOU,
THERE IS ABSOLUTELY
NO SIGNIFICANT
RISK TO LOCAL PEOPLE...



wrote to the City Council late last year asking for the full disclosure of substances and processes involved at the research plant, and for monitoring of all discharges from the site, with findings routinely reported to the City Council and made available to 'responsible amenity societies'. Tom Huggon, vice-chairman of the society, claimed such a procedure 'is the only way to restore public confidence and ensure that the best efforts are made to preserve the safety of local people'. The letter has received no reply.

Similar requests for information regarding activities at the plant, in particular from Friends of the Earth and Sneinton CND, have proved no more rewarding. A reply from Cllr David Tongue, chairman of the Planning Committee, appeared to suggest that details of substances used, stored and disposed of at the Boots laboratories would not necessarily be made available to the public at all. 'Not

responding to our enquiries does nothing to lessen the concern of people living close to the Boots site,' said Tim Bullock, chairman of Sneinton CND. 'It is inappropriate for a plant to emit any radiation at all in a densely populated area. Safety levels of radiation are a matter of international dispute'.

Trent Ward Labour Party, which has the premises within its boundaries, has passed a resolution opposing any emission of radioactive waste from the buildings. Manvers Ward has called on the Council to prevent any incineration at the site until the establishment of independent monitoring systems. An environmental health officer said recently that more discussions with Boots are to take place before construction is completed.

It was an incident at Boots' manufacturing works, adjacent to the Pennyfoot Street site, which awakened local people to the nature of Boots' activities. On Sunday 24th April 1983 an explosion tore a

LETTERS



Claimants protest

Dear Citywise,

It seems tragic that, despite 'many hours of agonised discussion' and 'soul-searching', the CPSA (Strike at the DHSS - Citywise no.3) remains prepared to defend strike action as a response to staff shortages in DHSS offices. As must be clear to all, such action is taken at the expense of claimants,

causing further hardship to the millions of people, young and old, who are dependent on state benefits. It is a strategy which rules out the possibility of collective action between claimants and CPSA members and which actually saves the Government money. Are there really, as CPSA claim, no other options?

In any case, the Social Security apparatus is, as it stands, alienating, isolating and miserly - a confusing and utterly inaccessible institution. Few claimants will accept that more staff and a more smoothly run benefits system will really improve their quality of life. It is not until the CPSA develops a strategy which radically challenges the repressive nature of social security payments that they can count on the support and cooperation of claimants.

Claimants Action Nottingham,
c/o ICC, Mansfield Road.

Why meat?

Dear Citywise,

As contributors to, and supporters of, *Citywise*, we are writing to protest against the paper continually including meat recipes. Many of the readership are vegetarians or vegans and don't expect an alternative paper to endorse the slaughter and daily cruelty to animals which is part and parcel of the meat machine. Human freedom and animal rights are one struggle, one fight - please let's not have *Citywise* perpetuating the belief that animals are only there for our pleasure and standards.

Peace and freedom,
Ross Bradshaw, Chris Cook,
Kate Marsden

large hole in the factory roof and shot a cloud of hydrobromic acid high above Sneinton. Four people, including a passer-by were treated for minor burns from exposure to the gas and 40 firemen fought for several hours to control the situation. Debris from the explosion demolished the roof of a local pub.

The incident led to an appeal for more public control over the processing of dangerous chemicals in the city. John Carter, councillor for Trent Ward, claimed at the time to be appalled by the danger the works posed to local residents and called for an enquiry into the accident. He has since been satisfied that the Boots Company carry out the most stringent safeguards with regard to their activities. But others have been less impressed by assurances from Boots' public relations department that 'there was little danger to the public', and by the press release giving details of Boots' own inquiry into the affair.

According to Boots, the explosion was 'due to operator error... Disciplinary action is being taken... control procedures are being reviewed and where necessary tightened... The factory inspector has confirmed that there was no significant risk to the general public'.

Sneinton Environmental Society have commented, 'The explosion has demonstrated that safety standards can become lax and that when dangerous substances are being handled the results can be disastrous for the local community.' They claim that, in the light of recent proposals, the incident further supports their case for 'vigilant independent monitoring' at the Pennyfoot Street site.

A senior fire prevention officer has stated that Boots' safety procedures are of a very high standard and that a more serious accident than occurred in April last year is very unlikely. 'The place is never going to erupt,' he said. Surely of some comfort to the residents of Sneinton! However, as has been pointed out, the emission of fumes and radioactive substances is not as apparent as an explosion. It possibly represents a more insidious danger to local people.

Local groups will continue to press for the release of information on the nature of substances and discharges involved. ●

SPEAKING OUT

Conditioning for violence

THIS IS THE FIRST of a new series in which we invite local groups with strong views on a particular issue to argue their case as forcefully as possible. Please contact us if you wish to contribute. We should also be glad to hear from readers who would like to comment on the opinions expressed in this column.

By Nottingham Rape Crisis Centre Collective

RAPE AND WOMAN-battering are the only crimes which are persistently committed by men against women. We would argue that these crimes are used to control women and maintain men's domination in society. Rape is an expression of hate and an effective way of keeping women in their place.

From birth, boys and girls are prepared to become men and women in a society which equates masculinity with aggression and femininity with passivity and co-operation. Throughout childhood, boys are encouraged to play lively, active games while girls play with games and toys likely to encourage passivity and acceptance, e.g. looking after dolls and dressing up. Girls do not become familiar with the potential of their bodies and their clothing is often restrictive - their training does not include fighting back.

In their teenage years, girls learn that they must not approach boys but must guard their sexuality, while boys are expected to be aggressive, macho and, if possible, sexually experienced. The media constantly reinforce this image that men are the aggressors and women passive acceptors; e.g. James Bond alternately whips out his penis and his revolver - an equation of male sexuality with violence and power.

Women, particularly in advertising, are depicted as objects, bodies offered to men to be taken and used. Female conditioning helps women to believe that it is appealing to be weak and helpless and our greatest need is for a strong man to protect and dominate us. From this follows the myth that all women want to be raped - we are waiting to accept whatever a man chooses to force on us. Films which glamourise sexual attack, portraying it as a turn-on, are aimed at men. While men try to live up to an ideal of potent virility, women are pushed into a role which denies them the right to self-determination.

Against this background, what starts as a wolf whistle can end in rape. We are trained to accept male attention, to be flattered by it, although we may feel vulnerable and threatened by the wolf whistlers on the street who comment on us as sexual objects. If we don't respond, we are stand-offish; if we respond pleasantly, they believe we have given them licence to go further; if we object hostilely, they decide to punish us.

Those attentions, however apparently harmless, are the backdrop to every woman's life in this society. We have been taught to be passive and receptive of male attentions but at the same time we have been taught to be frightened of rape. Thus it is a short step from the tension of walking past a group of men in the street to the fear and dread which prevents us from living full and active lives on a par with men. Sexual harassment by men in whatever environment is a kind of rape and rape is part of the total way in which women are suffocated in a male-dominated society.

The Nottingham Rape Crisis Centre operates a telephone line for women who have been raped or sexually assaulted. We are there to talk with women about what is an extremely traumatic experience, but possibly one which they feel unable to talk about with anyone they know.

We can also give advice and information on a variety of practical issues, e.g. reporting to the police, arranging for a pregnancy test if necessary etc. In addition, we aim to educate the public on the reality of rape and to challenge the myths which surround it by talking to various groups and organisations. We are open 11 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday to Friday on Nottingham 410440.

A training scheme for women interested in joining the Rape Crisis Centre is to begin on Thursday 15th March. It will consist of one 2-hour session per week for 6 weeks and will end with a day session on Saturday 28th April. If you would like more details, please 'phone the Centre or write c/o 37a Mansfield Road, Nottingham. ●

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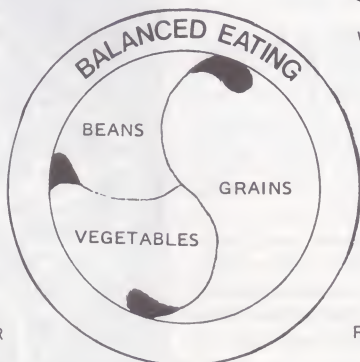
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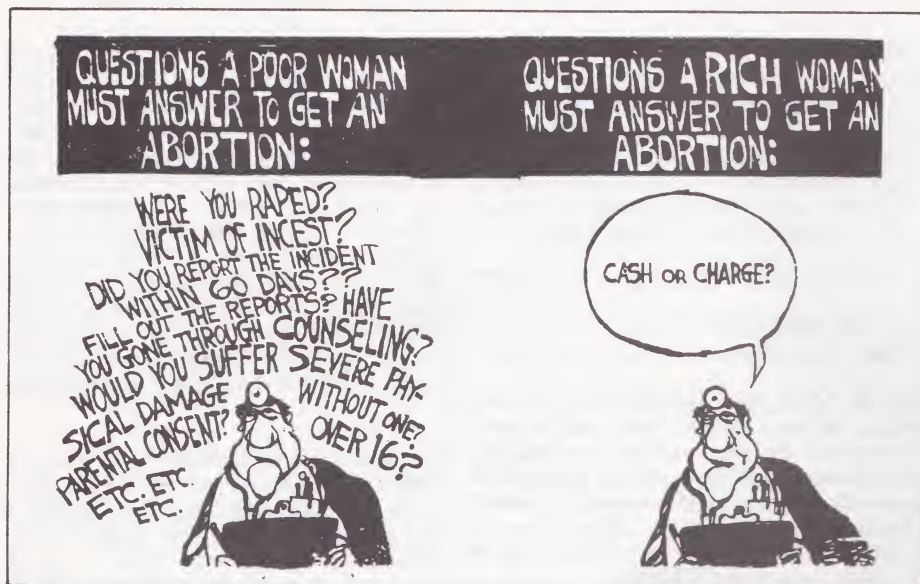
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ouroboros



Abortion: meeting women's needs



By Paula Brady

MY INTEREST IN the issue of abortion stems from a deeply felt conviction that our right to control our own fertility is a necessary prerequisite to any change in our role. If we are ever to be liberated from the 'natural' roles of wives and mothers which have traditionally been imposed upon us then we must have the legal and unqualified right to exercise control over our own sexuality, our own bodies, our own lives. This means having access to freely available - and safe - contraception and free abortion on demand.

Obviously there are many aspects of the issue which could be examined. For example, the whole question of what 'choice' really means in a society that provides very little in the way of child care facilities or job opportunities for women, and where the problems of low income and inadequate housing disproportionately affect many women. Also, the recent split in NAC, or the inconsistencies that exist between the private and NHS sectors, or indeed the whole question of time limits.

I've chosen, however, to concentrate on a facet of the debate which is often overlooked - the very spurious distinction between abortion and contraception, for the distinction is, I believe, illusory.

Birth control and abortion: what difference?

Birth control and abortion are inseparably linked - and not just in that both are officially part of the health service... Where does birth control end and abortion begin?

Birth control methods range from those which prevent fertilisation - e.g. the cap, the pill, sheaths - to those which act after fertilisation has or may have occurred - e.g. coils/IUDs, post-coital contraception/the morning-after pill. Anti-abortionist groups, such as SPUC (the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child) and the infelicitously-

named LIFE, see these links and do not confine their anti-choice arguments to abortion per se.

In April '83, for example, LIFE tried unsuccessfully to have two clinics prosecuted for providing post-coital birth control. Had this prosecution succeeded, there is little doubt that they would have gone on to launch a full-scale attack on other methods and whittle away the already very restricted choices which we have campaigned for many decades to establish.

Just to illustrate the verity of this, Michael Schwartz, a director of 'March for Life', was quoted in the *National Catholic Register*: "We want those babies who are killed by IUDs to be protected by our basic law... The IUD is an invention perhaps unique in history. Prostaglandins, rat poison, guns, even tactical nuclear weapons can all kill people, but all of them (with the possible exception of the Neutron Bomb) can be used for some other, less malign purpose. The IUD has no other conceivable purpose than to kill innocent defenceless people... it would not be unreasonable to declare an absolute ban on the manufacture, sale, distribution or use of the IUD."

And page 14 of LIFE's *Guide to Running a Caring Service* explains that if a woman has had a negative pregnancy test and appears relieved, "Under no circumstances must a LIFE adviser recommend or give advice about contraception or refer to any agency that gives such advice."

What greater encroachment on our fundamental rights than this, the wilful restriction of information? Moreover, it is clear from these comments - there are others opposing the pill and indeed all methods of artificial contraception - that the *anti-abortion movement is an anti-choice movement*. Seen in this light, their attacks are even more insidious, more erosive of our choices and rights as grown and responsible women.

Another important link

Very conveniently, though, our moral protectors overlook one further, perhaps surprising, link between birth control and abortion - the fact that increased usage of birth control is *positively* correlated with increased requests for abortion. I met when working for the Brook Advisory Bureau, and indeed know amongst my female friends, many women who prefer to use a method of birth control with an appreciable failure rate - e.g. caps, sheaths, spermicides - than accept the medical side-effects and risks associated with more 'reliable' methods. (Witness the very recent evidence on the connection between oral contraception and cancer!)

A woman seeking birth control is not, after all, ill: if she were, she might accept more readily the side-effects of a prescribed 'remedy'. But why should she have to risk suffering the side-effects of something which is not effecting any cure, and which may well adversely effect her well-being?

The choice of using a safer method - safer, that is, in terms of its side-effects rather than its reliability as a contraceptive - but one with more scope for human error is invariably a considered and logical decision. It is made by women who accept that abortion is, or should be, available as a back-up. And the relationship between birth control and abortion *could* be seen constructively for, in reality, the combination of the two presents the least risk to life of the various options; it always allows for a fully predictable control of fertility.

I do not want to idealise abortion; from my own personal experience and from contact with other women, I know how traumatic an experience it is. But branding us as murderers, killers of "innocent defenceless people", ignores the fact that it is precisely *because* the masses of women



'Relative autonomy in motion' - a NAC poster
The forces working against women's abortion rights are helped by this sort of confusion

throughout the world know and understand the value of life that we demand the right to control our own bodies, the right to have abortions.

Abortion law: whose law?

It was never the intention of the '67 Abortion Act to give women the right to choose. Safeguarding doctors' time-honoured monopoly on diagnosis and treatment, the Act gave two medical practitioners this right. Women have thus been left at the mercy of the ideologies and moral convictions of GPs and consultants. Obviously, immense discrepancies exist between individual doctors while the only variation that exists between women is in their ability to pay - legal and moral ambiguities have always seemed to diminish when a woman can produce the requisite amount of money. It's the usual story: one law for the rich, another for the poor.

Corrie through the back door Restrictions through the back door

Lack of space prevents a full discussion of the law. However, did you know that in March '81 the 'social clause', which was one of the main clauses used by doctors for granting abortions, was simply removed? After 14 years of frontal parliamentary assaults had failed, a drastic amendment without a change in legislation or Parliamentary discussion through the misuse of a bureaucratic procedure known as a Statutory Instrument. Doctors who can't provide a strong medical reason for carrying out an abortion now face prosecution and the maximum penalty is life imprisonment. At least five leading gynaecologists have been formally cautioned. Some sympathetic doctors appear to be fulfilling their obligation by labelling women 'neurotic' or 'depressed' - thereby reinforcing the idea that women who seek abortions suffer from psychiatric conditions and, conversely, that motherhood is 'natural', 'right' and 'normal'.

Regional provision

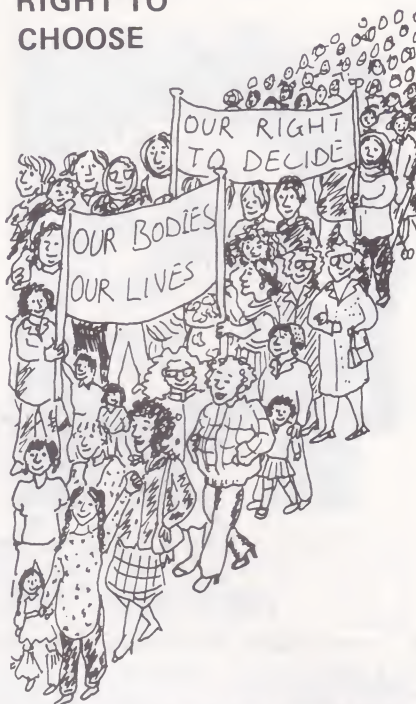
But the enormous power of the medical profession has repercussions over and above the effects it has on individual women requesting abortion. The '67 Act did not make the provision of abortion facilities - OR PERSONNEL! - mandatory. It is as a direct result of the personal viewpoints of consultant gynaecologists that immense variations in facilities exist regionally. (In '79, for example, the percentage of women living in North Devon who obtained abortions through the NHS was 94%; in Nottinghamshire, it averaged 66%; in Birmingham, 10% - figures approximate).

Provision of day care facilities: reducing cost

Moreover, at a time when the government is eagerly seeking ways of imposing cuts in public expenditure, it refuses to act upon the fact that *money could be saved and efficiency increased by the provision of out-patient abortion facilities*. Most women are treated unnecessarily as in-patients.

IF ADEQUATE DAY CARE FACILITIES WERE PROVIDED, THE

DECLARATION OF A WOMAN'S RIGHT TO CHOOSE



NATIONAL ABORTION CAMPAIGN

COST OF A FULLY COMPREHENSIVE SERVICE, WHICH WOULD PROVIDE ABORTIONS FOR ALL THE WOMEN IN THIS COUNTRY WHO SEEK THEM COULD ACTUALLY BE LESS THAN IT IS CURRENTLY TO CARRY OUT ABORTIONS ON LESS THAN HALF THE WOMEN SEEKING THEM. ●

BACK STREET

WHEN IS THE SIGHT of a seal being clubbed to death offensive? When it's not real, is the answer of Notts. Constabulary.

A couple of weeks ago, members of the Animal Rights Confederation picketed the Canadian High Commissioner at the Albany Hotel in protest against his government's seal cull. When the protesters tried to make their protest a little more graphic by a mock seal kill, the police threatened arrest and stopped the show. Bet they wouldn't try to stop the real thing. ●

THE DECLINE of the Communist Party continues apace. For several months, the CP has been trying its hardest to go extinct in Nottingham by considering the suspension of its biggest asset - John Peck.

Peck, you'll remember, came within a handful of votes of getting on the City Council last year. He's well-known and liked for his participation in any number of campaigns and good causes. However, he has split the party locally by continuing to write letters to the non-union *Evening Post* in defiance of the trade union boycott.

The National Executive of the party had to intervene to warn the local party that this sort of strike-breaking was not a 'suspension' matter. The problem is that Peck is the only CP member in Nottingham who has any semblance of public credibility. It will be interesting to see whether his comrades decide that the way forward for the CP is by upholding trade union principles or by getting publicity in the local media at any price. ●

Equal opportunities

AS A FOLLOW-UP to the November 'Women's Day for Equal Opportunity' in Nottingham, a successful half-day conference was held on February 18 at the International Community Centre. Nearly 100 women representing a wide range of interests and organisations attended.

After a preliminary talk by City Councillor Lee Harrison, the recommendations were introduced and explained and then discussed by the women present. They agreed that an interim Women's Sub-Committee should be set up, hopefully by May, and that after a year it would be reviewed by another open meeting. Well-advertised open meetings would be held at least three times during the year to enable women to comment on the way in which the sub-committee was functioning and for members of the committee to inform those women of current activities.

Recommendations for the way in which a City Council Women's Sub-Committee should be formed had been drawn from the previous conference. The second open meeting was to encourage maximum discussion of these proposals, and to decide on the structure of the sub-committee and the way in which representatives would be elected.

It was agreed that the interim sub-committee should consist of:

- 7 representatives of women's groups whose aims broadly agreed with the principles of the Equal Opportunities Committee, to be elected by postal ballot.
- 5 representatives of women from the Asian/Afro-Caribbean community to be chosen/elected by the women in those communities.
- 5 representatives of working parties based on issues such as employment, women at home, the Women's Centre etc. etc., the representatives to be chosen/elected by these groups.
- 3 representatives reflecting the groups/individuals who are subjected to particular discriminatory treatment, e.g. lesbians, the disabled, ex-offenders, single parents, older women etc.

Meetings of the sub-committee, which it was recommended should take place monthly, will be open to the public and press and it is hoped that time will be given at the end for members of the public to speak to the meeting.

Arrangements for the ballots are already being made by the City Council's Equal Opportunities Unit and dates for the working parties will soon be available. ●

Bill tied up in Notts

By John Batchellor

"WE MUST DESTROY the myth about Labour county councillors in Nottinghamshire. They are not a bunch of idiots..."

With this appeal to Parliament, Mansfield's MP Don Concannon summed up a 2½ year fiasco in which a routine legislation renewal has become embroiled with controversy, costly delays and resulting embarrassment to the controlling county council Labour group.

The issue in question is the Nottinghamshire County Council Bill, which has to be passed in some form before the end of the year if the council is to renew miscellaneous powers used by its departments.

The problem is that the council doggedly insists on the Bill including a contentious measure criminalising demonstrations, however peaceful, if they have not given 24 hours' notice to the police. Parliamentary scrutineers have found the section concerned, clause 6, to be opaque in its practical implications and not appropriate to local legislation. As a consequence, the Bill has met considerable resistance in committee and



in the early stages of the Bill's promotion, the county council made no attempt to withdraw the notice clause when its power to do so was clarified. Instead, a minor concession was made by reducing the notice period from 72 to 24 hours.

This hardline stance was adopted against the grain of prevailing Labour Party opinion, and against the advice of the NCCL who foresaw accurately that the Bill would be held up.

Other aspects of the Bill have only been removed at the last minute, after pressure during the Parliamentary committee stage. Some have come in for strong criticism.

And anyone inclined to view the county council Labour group as a helpless third party not responsible for the more anti-democratic parts of the Notts. Bill should take note of the following letter from Dennis Pettitt which Don Concannon quoted in the same debate:

Who's against the Bill

When the NCCL hurriedly co-ordinated some objectors in December 1982, these included a specimen number of trade union branches such as NUPE Social Services (Nottm), NUPE Divisional Council (Nottm), APEX Nottm No 1, NATFHE Regional Executive, NUPE Notts. Admin and ASTMS (University). More systematically, NCCL contacted every one of the trades councils in the county. These federations of union branches cover hundreds of thousands of workers. All are opposed to clause 6, which would restrict spontaneous marches arising from management-provoked walkouts and produce what Harriet Harman calls "an imposed cooling-off period". The Notts Association of Trades Councils is also opposed to clause 6.

Political groups such as the Nottinghamshire County and Broxtowe

constituency Labour Parties, the Asian Youth Movement, the Indian Youth Association, the Communist Party and the Black Peoples Freedom Movement also object to clause 6, as do a variety of single-issue campaigns, such as Lenton and St Ann's CND groups, the Medical Campaign against Nuclear Weapons, Compassion in World Farming, Nottingham NAC (National Abortion Campaign) and Anti-Apartheid.

The response of Don Concannon, MP for Mansfield to these objectors was to say that "Those organisations represent only a minuscule proportion of the people of Nottinghamshire." The main bodies in favour of clause 6 are the police, the Conservative Party and (currently) a majority of the county council Labour group.

The police are so keen on a notice requirement that deputy chief constable Tony Tyler travelled to Westminster to lobby for a 72 hour minimum.

Nearby areas: the position

Most local Bills have not chosen to make criminals out of the organisers of spontaneous peaceful marches. A few have - the West Midlands accepted a 72 hour notice clause for its Bill in 1977 when it was Tory-controlled - but most have not. Every council that accepts such a clause sets a bad precedent and encourages the extension of such provisions on to a national scale.

None of the recent Bills in the East Midlands demand notice for marches. The Derbyshire Act 1981 (as a Bill) had plans to control large assemblies and create offences, but these were dropped after the arguments against had been heard.

The public order section of the Humberside Act 1982 prohibits touting by photographers, but does not restrict marches. And although possible direct action by farmers in Lincolnshire was claimed by Tory councillor Ernest Chambers as a justification for clause 6 during a debate on the Notts. Bill a year ago, the East Lindsey Act 1982 manages quite happily without any such restrictions on marches.

"I have to advise you that the full Labour Group here have debated this subject on 4 occasions...When I get harangued by people in the Labour Party to conform to the London norm, or anybody else's norm, then I cannot but help but feel apprehension about the direction in which my Party is going."

Perhaps the most bizarre aspect of the Bill was illustrated by Dennis Skinner when he said of the "code of practice":

"Nottinghamshire county council has a cheek to press the legislation when that document has not been made available." ●

What clause 6 does

(1) 24 hours' notice of any march in the county must be given, with details of date, time and route.

(2) If notice is not given, people "conducting or organising" a procession can be charged before a magistrates' court and fined £200. They cannot choose trial by jury. How "conducting or organising" is defined is left nice and vague.

(3) Funerals are exempted, as are processions "commonly or customarily held". This provision discriminates in favour of established cultures and opinions.

(4) The chief constable should issue a "code of practice" to organisers. He can write what he likes into the code. (The West Midlands code mixes actual legal requirements with arbitrary impositions by its chief constable and presents the whole package to the reader as something to be complied with).

(5) DPP consent is needed to prosecute.

on the floor of the Commons, and has needed the helping hand of the Conservative Whips' Office in making progress.

Despite widespread opposition to the clause across the county (including objections by every Trades Council, by the Nottinghamshire Labour Party and by numerous single-issue campaigns and political groups), the council has declined repeated requests to give reasons why it thinks the measure necessary.

Even though it may have been misadvised

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● Further details available from:

The Principal,
The Co-operative College,
Stanford Hall,
Loughborough,
Leics. LE12 5QR.

WOMENS FESTIVAL FILMS The Subjective Factor (29-31 March 7.30pm); A Question of Silence (5-7 April 6&8pm); The Girl With The Red Hair (12-14 April 6&8pm)...FEMALE FRIENDS season in May.

BLACK MUSIC, BLACK POLITICS Blacks Britannica/Blood Ah Go Run/Riots & Rumours of Riots (20 March 7.30pm); Heartland Reggae/Rasta & the Ball (3 April 7pm); Burning an Illusion/Pressure (17 April 6pm); Babylon (26 April 6&8pm)...see Video Library for Dread Beat n Blood etc.

HOCKLEY POETS POPTICIANS/JOOLZ/PAT CONDELL (11 April) BENJAMIN ZEPHANIAH MARSHA PRESCOD (20 April at Vino's) JOHN COOPER CLARKE (10 May at Vino's)

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CITYWISE

This is a free service. If your group's event is not listed here it's because you haven't let Citywise know of your meeting - please put us on your mailing list! Please indicate whether there is or isn't easy access for people with disabilities and whether a creche is available. The next issue will cover the period starting April 28 and listings should be sent or handed in by April 21.

ADDRESSES

Cooperative Arts Theatre:
George Street, 476096.
Film Theatre: Broad Street,
46095.
Garage: St. Mary's Gate.
Marcus Garvey Centre: Lenton
Blvd.
Midland Group: Carlton Street,
582636.
Nottingham Playhouse:
Wellington Circus, 419419.
Old Maltcross: St. James' St.
Rock City: Talbot St. 412544.
Vino's: Victoria St.
Yorker: Mansfield Road.

EXHIBITIONS

- Ends Mar 20: 'Women's Peace Exhibition' - Central Library.
- Ends Mar 31: 'Screenprints by Gavin Janjtes' - Hyson Green Library, Gregory Blvd.
- Ends Apr 110am-4.45: 'Swedish Photography'/'British

- Apr 7: 7.30pm: Perspective Theatre Co. present 'Peace at any Price' - Indian Community Centre, Rawson St., New Basford.
- Apr 11: 8pm: 'The Popticians'/'Joolz'/'Pat Condel' - Midland Group.
- Apr 12: 7.30pm: 'Midlands Dance Co.' - Bonington Theatre, Arnold Leisure Centre.
- Apr 12 & 13: 7.30pm: Marty St. James and Anne Wilson present 'True Life Romance' - Midland Group.
- Apr 14 - May 12: 'Blood Brothers' by Willie Russell - Playhouse
- Apr 16 - 21: 'Whose Life is it Anyway' by Brian Clarke. - Coop Arts Theatre.
- Apr 20: 8pm: 'Benjamin Zephaniah'/'Marsha Prescod' - Vino's
- Apr 24: 7.30pm: Torch Theatre Co. present 'Laurel and Hardy' - Bonington Theatre, Arnold Leisure Centre.
- Apr 25 & 26: 7.30pm: Theatre de Complicite present 'A Minute too Late' - Midland Group.

FILM

- Mar 17: 6 & 8pm. 'Born in Flames' (15) - Midland Group.
- Mar 17 & 18: 5 & 8pm: 'Finally Sunday' (15) - Film Theatre
- Mar 20: 7pm: 'Blacks Britannica'/'Blood Ah Go Run'/'Riots and Rumours of Riots' (Club) - Midland Group
- Mar 21: 8pm: 'Rebecca' (PG) - Midland Group
- Mar 22: 2.6 & 8pm, Mar 23 & 24: 6 & 8pm. 'Liquid Sky' (18) - Midland Group
- Mar 23: 7.30pm Mar 24 & 25: 4.30 & 7.30pm: 'Sophie's Choice' (15) - Film Theatre
- Mar 27: 6 & 8pm: 'Days of Heaven' (PG) - Midland Group.
- Mar 28: 8pm: 'Cubism and the Cinema' - Midland Group.
- Mar 29: 2 & 7.30pm; Mar 30 & 31: 7.30pm: 'The Subjective Factor' (Club) - Midland Group.
- Mar 30: 7.30pm. 'Celine and Julie go Boating' (PG) - Film Theatre

- Apr 18: 8pm: 'The Shining' (18) - Midland Group.
- Apr 19: 2.6 & 8pm; Apr 20 & 21: 6 & 8pm: 'Betrayal' (15) - Midland Group.
- Apr 20: 7.30pm; Apr 21 & 22: 5 & 8pm: 'My Favourite Year' (PG) - Film Theatre.
- Apr 24: 8pm: 'Home from the Hill' (15) - Midland Group.
- Apr 25: 7.30pm: Video Programmes 3 & 4 - Midland Group.
- Apr 26: 2.6 & 8pm: 'Babylon' (18) - Midland Group.
- Apr 27: 7pm; Apr 28: 4 & 7pm: 'Tokyo Story' - Midland Group.

MUSIC

Regularities

- SATURDAYS: Yates'. 'Sam the Man'. Hearty Goodfellow: Live Music. Beechtree Lodge, Beeston: Robin Hood Folk Club, Old Maltcross: 'Brendan Kidulis' and guests, (lunchtime); Disco (evenings).
- SUNDAYS: Old Maltcross: Disco (evening), Bell Inn, Long Row: 'Footwarmers'. (Lunchtime), Yorker: Live Music. Hearty Goodfellow: 'Dawn Trader', Boulevard Hotel, Radford Blvd: Coop Folk Club, Dixie's Arms, Bagthorpe: Folk Workshop. Yates', Long Row: 'Sam the Man'.
- MONDAYS: Bell Inn, Long Row: 'Omega Jazz Band', Hearty Goodfellow: Pop and Rock. Narrow Boat, Canal St.: Folk. Yates', Long Row: 'Personal Touch'.
- TUESDAYS: Bell Inn, Long Row: 'Society Five', Running Horse, Canning Circus: 'Teddy Fullick Quintet', Yorker: Pop and rock, Jacey's, Heathcote St: 'Andy, Boris and Keith', Old Maltcross: 'Jacob's Soberspeak Blues and Folk Night'.
- WEDNESDAYS: Hearty Goodfellow. Pop and Rock. Three Horseshoes, Beeston: Beeston Folk Club, Gladstone, Loscoe Rd.: Carrington Triangle Folk Club, Yates', Long Row: 'Sam the Man'.
- THURSDAYS: Yates', Long Row: 'Hotshots', Old Maltcross:
- Mar 21. 'Milestones' plus mystery guest - Vino's.
- Mar 21: 'Julian Cope' - Rock City, £3.
- Mar 21. 'Chain Gang' - Old Maltcross.
- Mar 22: 'Johnny Thunders and the Original Heartbreakers'/'Beki Bondage' - Palais, £3.50.
- Mar 22: 'Chalice' - Marcus Garvey Centre, £2, £2.50
- Mar 26: 'Simon Smeeton'/'Dave Mitchell' - Old Maltcross.
- Mar 28: 'DC 10' - Old Maltcross.
- Mar 28: 'Geoff Warren Band' - Vino's, £3, £2.50, £1.50.
- Mar 28: 'No Tears' - Garage
- Mar 29: 'Prowler' - Yorker
- Mar 31. 'Showaddywaddy' - Sherwood Rooms
- Apr 1 Jazz-funk all-dayer featuring 'Slave' - Rock City £5
- Apr 2: 'Simon Smeeton'/'Dave Mitchell' - Old Maltcross
- Apr 2: 'Frontier' - Yorker
- Apr 3: 'Chinese Gangster Element' - Yorker
- Apr 4. 'New Apostles' - Old Maltcross.
- Apr 4 'Pallas' - Rock City
- Apr 4: 'Lee Konitz Quartet' - Vino's £3, £2.50, £1.50.
- Apr 4 'Linkmen' - Garage
- Apr 9: 'Simon Smeeton'/'Dave Mitchell' - Old Maltcross.
- Apr 10: 'Quasar' - Yorker.
- Apr 11: 'Dealer' - Old Maltcross.
- Apr 12: 'Masquerade' - Yorker
- Apr 12: 8pm: 'Christy Moore' - Clinton Rooms, Thurland St £3, £2.50.
- Apr 13. 'Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five' - Rock City £3.
- Apr 16 'Yellowman' - Marcus Garvey Centre £6
- Apr 18. 'Serious Drinking' (TBC) Garage
- Apr 18 'Carmen' - Old Maltcross.
- Apr 18: 'Nick Cave Band' - Rock City £3
- Apr 19: 'Heavy Duty' - Yorker
- Apr 22: Reggae All-nighter - Palais.
- Apr 23: 'Die Laughing' - Yorker

- Sat 24th Mar. 10.30-5.30. 'Women's Art Change'. A national women's conference at the International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd.
- Sat 24 Mar 10am-4pm: 'Health and Fitness'. Women only day at the Victoria Leisure Centre Creche available while you can experiment with aerobics, yoga, relaxation, self-defence, squash, fencing etc. 50p day, 25p half day.
- Sun. 25 Mar. 2-6pm: 'Meena Bazaar'. An Asian women's festival at the Sneinton Youth Centre. Handicrafts, food, dancing etc.
- Wed. 28th Mar. 7.30: 'Women for Peace'. A talk by Sarah Breakwell at the Trent Poly, Bonington Lecture Theatre

Any enquiries on prices, disabled access or whatever to Penny 818259 or Jo 626721.

Anarchism

- Nottingham Anarchist Group meets every Friday, 8pm, Nottingham Community Arts and Crafts Centre, Gregory Blvd. Good wheelchair access.
- Thurs 29 Mar London - 'Stop the City' - anti-militarist, anti-profit, anti-vivisection, anti-profit, anti-mysogyny, anti and uncle on the day the 'City' counts up its winter profits. Nottingham transport (inc. women only coach) £3 or £5, tickets from Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St.

Poster Competition

- Child Poverty Action Group are launching a competition to find designs which 'explode the myths about poverty and the poor in Britain and project new and challenging images of poverty in the 1980s'. The prizes are £200 (which will certainly alleviate the winner's poverty), art materials and books. Entry forms from CPAG, 1 Macklin St, London WC2

The Earth

- Friends of the Earth meet every Tuesday at the Environmental Information Centre, 15 Goosegate. No wheelchair access.

Lesbian Link.

- Phone line for lesbians. Every Monday 7-9.30. Tel 410652. Phone for information, advice or details of the lesbian group (which meets fortnightly for discussions and support), the monthly newsletter or the housing co-op.

Anti-Apartheid month of action.

Concludes with:

- Monday 19th March 7.30: 'Stop the Apartheid War' public meeting at the I.C.C., Mansfield Road.
- Wednesday 21st March. London, National Parliamentary lobby, Ring Mick 584722 or Liz 624399 for local transport details.
- Saturday 24th March 10-2.00: 'Women in the South African Liberation Struggle'. Films at the Central Library, Angel Row. Good w/c access

- Friday 23rd March 7.30: 'Thomas Hardy's Poetry', an illustrated talk at the Department of Adult Education, Shakespeare Street.

Disarmament.

- Wednesday 23rd March 7.30: Radcliffe CND public meeting on 'Medical Effects of Nuclear Weapons'. The Grange, Radcliffe.
- Friday 30th March 7.30: Basford CND dance with live music from Cuban Heels and Escape Route Bar and food at the New Basford Community centre, Zula Road, 60p.
- Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th April. The Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation have organised a major conference on 'Disarmament: an independent foreign policy'. The conference will include workshops and speakers: Audrey Wise, Michael Meacher, Stuart Holland, Ken Coates, Peter Heathfield and a certain T.Benn. £5 to get in, meals extra, at Nottingham University Creche available. Booking advised - contact B.R.P.F., Bertrand Russell House, Gamble Street, Nottingham.
- Saturday 15th April 12.00 onwards. Chilwell action! Now the Children's Action Group

Ask your grocer if your eggs are free range, boycott if not

- Sunday March 25th 7.30. Animal Rights Confederation meeting incl talk from Chris Williamson from League Against Cruel Sports, at Narrow Boat Pub. No w/c access.
- Sunday April 1st 'Spring walk' beside Salepharm commercial vivisection laboratories. Meet 12.00 noon at Navigation Inn, Shardlow near Derby
- Saturday April 7th and Saturday April 20th: Hunt Saboteurs street collections in Keyworth and Sutton-in-Ashfield respectively Ring 412209 for details.
- Friday April 13th 7.30: 'Vegetarianism - the way forward'. Talk organised by the Vegie Society at the Theosophical Hall, Maid Marian Way.
- Saturday April 28th National demonstration against factory 'farming' in Birmingham, concentrating on a Brum battery hen factory 'Conflict' playing in the evening as a fund raiser. One coach returning early. One after concert. £2.50/£2.00. Ring 201839 for more details.

- Saturday 31st March 10.00 - 4.00: 'Forward Planning for Voluntary Groups'. Day workshop in Belper for community arts oriented groups. £3 to get in. Ring Stephanie Record on Loughborough 218292 to book.

- Saturday 24th and Sunday 25th March: 'Printing for Beginners'. A practical weekend in South Normanton, Derbyshire on silk screen, graphics and layout for prospective printers. £6/£3 Contact Peter Wright on (0773)813343 for more details.

- Saturday 28th April 10.00-5.00: 'Making your point' workshop in Leicester on cartooning. Event is suitable for practicing or prospective cartoonists. The tutor is 'Brick', alias John Clark, who regularly draws for Citywise (and just about everyone else). Limited numbers - Ring Stephanie Record on Loughborough

- Dolls' - Castle Museum.
- Mar 17 - Apr 14: 'Gerard Hemsworth' - Midland Group.
- Mar 17 - Apr 21: 'Jewellery Redefined' - Midland Group.
- Mar 27 - Apr 16: 'Wild Life Paintings by Robin Gibbard' - Wollaton Hall, Wollaton.
- Apr 7 - May 13: 10am-5.45pm: 'Raoul Dufy' - Castle Museum.
- Apr 21 - May 19: 'Edward Allington - In Pursuit of Savage Luxury' - Midland Group.

PERFORMANCE

- Mar 20 - Mar 24: 7.30pm: Nottingham Bluecoat Gilbert and Sullivan Society present: 'Iolanthe' - Playhouse.
- Mar 20, 23, 24: 7.30pm, Mar 21, 22: 2.30pm: House present 'A Tale of Steel and Sorrow' - United Reform Church, Gregory Blvd.
- Mar 21 & 22: 7.30pm: Natural Theatre Co. present 'Eat Me' - Clarendon College, Pelham Ave.
- Mar 22: 7.30pm: 'Patricia Beer' (poet) - Beeston Library.
- Mar 24: 10.30-11.30: 'Visible Women' - International Community Centre, Mansfield Road.
- Mar 24: 7.30pm: 'Benjamin Zephaniah' plus local poets - Green Community Centre, Gregory Blvd. £1, 50p.
- Mar 26 - 31: 'Happy as a Sandbag' - Cooperative Arts Theatre.
- Mar 29: 7.30pm. Women's Theatre Group present: 'Trade Secrets' - International Community Centre, Mansfield Road. Women Only.
- Mar 30 & 31: 7.30pm: Peta Lily present 'Red Heart' - Midland Group.
- Mar 31: 8pm: Theatre: 'Witch Women' plus live band and disco - Green Community Centre, Gregory Blvd. Women Only.
- Apr 2: 7.30pm: 'Sasono Mulio Dance Co.' (Dance from Java) - Clarendon College, Pelham Ave.
- Apr 5 & 6: 8.30pm: 'The Joeys' - Midland Group.

- Mar 31: 11am: Video Library Show. - Midland Group.
- Mar 30 & Apr 1: 5 & 8pm: 'Sisters or The Balance of Happiness' (15) - Film Theatre.
- Apr 3: 7pm: 'Heartland Reggae'/'Rasta and the Ball' (15) - Midland Group.
- Apr 4 8pm: 'Amityville Horror' (18) - Midland Group.
- Apr 5: 2.6 & 8pm; Apr 6 & 7: 6 & 8pm: 'A Question of Silence' (15) - Midland Group.
- Apr 6: 7.30pm; Apr 7 & 8: 5 & 8pm: 'Come Back to the Five and Dime Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean' (18) - Film Theatre.
- Apr 10: 8pm: 'Comes a Horesman' (15) - Midland Group.
- Apr 11: 8pm: 'The Magnificent Ambersons' (U) - Midland Group.
- Apr 12: 2.6 & 8pm; Apr 13 & 14: 6 & 8pm: 'The Girl with the Red Hair' (PG) - Midland Group.
- Apr 13: 7.30pm; Apr 14 & 15: 5 & 8pm: 'Coup de Foudre' (15) - Film Theatre.
- Apr 17: 6pm: 'Burning an Illusion Pressure' (15) - Midland Group.

- Mar 17: 8pm: 'Ova' plus support - Queen's Walk Community Centre, Meadows. Women Only
- Mar 17: 'Sad Cafe' - Sherwood Rooms.
- Mar 17: 'Johnny Osbourne' plus support - Marcus Garvey Centre. £3, £3.59.
- Mar 18: 'Fallen Angel' - Yorker.
- Mar 19: 'Simon Smeeton'/'Dave Mitchell' - Old Maltcross.
- Mar 19: 'Rodney Burke and the Cruds' - Jacey's, Heathcote St.
- Mar 19: 'Heavy Pettin' - Rock City, £2.50.

- Apr 23: Zima - Palm Beach Club, 52 Queen's Road, Meadows. £1.50, £1.
- Apr 24: 'Dennis Brown' - Palais £5.
- Apr 24: 'Spear of Destiny' - Rock City £3
- Apr 25: 'Swan's Way' - Rock City
- Apr 25: 'Left Wing Rednecks' - Old Maltcross
- Apr 26: 8pm: 'Harvey Andrews' - Bonington Theatre, Arnold Leisure Centre
- Apr 26: 'General Public' (TBC) - Garage
- Apr 26: 'Seventh Era' - Yorker.

Women's Festival

- Wed. 21st Mar. 7.30: 'The Anti-Pornography Movement'. Talk by Ros Coward at Trent Poly. Chaucer Senior Common Room.



From Babylon at the Midland Group.

William Morris Exhibition

- Up to 29 April at the ICA, London. An exhibition of William Morris's work as a craft worker, writer and social revolutionary. There's a bus going down on 14th April and a minibus later in the month. Ring 582506 for details

Birth

- Thurs 12. April. 7.30: Nottingham Homebirth Support Group meets at the International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd.
- Tues 3 April 8pm: Pregnancy Testing Group meeting for new volunteers at the Women's Centre, 32a Shakespeare St

Women's Health

- Sat. 24th March. 10.30-4.00. Derby W.E.A. dayschool for women only - morning sessions on tranquilisers, afternoon session on cancer. Creche available. Ring Derby 31111 ext. 434/5 for venue, costs etc.

Parents' Aid

- New group for parents with children in care who meet to give support and help to each other. Ring Linda on Mansfield 795206 for details.

'Have Your Say'

- Thursday 29th March 7.30. A public meeting for city wide groups to put their views to the council representatives. Part of the series of meetings all over the city organised by the oddly named but widely representative Inner City Executive. Ring 410437 for details of meetings in your area.

'The Beano'

- Thursday 29th March 8.00. 'The Beano', a Red Ladder Theatre Company show at the Arnold Labour Club. Ring 265509 for details. Tickets on door £1.50/£1.00.

Women's Disco.

- Every Tuesday and alternate Saturdays. Upstairs bar Hearty Goodfellow, Maid Marian Way.

that Chilwell has officially become US Base 103

Nottingham CND, as part of the national CND Easter Action, are planning a protest there on April 15th. Chilwell will be a store and repair base for 'vehicles' and 'airfield support' - 78 acres of it with easy access to the M1 and the M6.

The details:

- a) The energetic way. Ride to Chilwell on your bike (decorated in suitable fashion) leaving the Old Market Square at 12.00.
- b) The traditional way. Meet at Beeston Recreation Ground (corner of Queen's Road and Dovecoat Lane) at 12.00 and proceed to Chilwell on foot, waving your banners.
- c) The quiet way. Just turn up at Chilwell.

The events at our part of Airstrip One involve 'chanting down Chilwell' - bring your instruments and voices. 'Decorating the fence' - on the side of the base along the main Derby to Nottingham Road. 'Visas' - CND are printing USA visas, which should allow people into the Chilwell area!

- Tuesday 27th March 2.00: A meeting for those who want to be involved in a children's area within the Nottingham Peace Festival (on July 8th), at CND office, 15 Goosegate.

• New Peace Groups Newly formed peace groups - East Leake CND (covering East Leake, West Leake, Sutton Bonnington, Gotham, Zouch, etc.) and Beeston Mothers against Cruise, both of which would welcome new members. Ring Richard on East Leake 6169 for the former and Jill on 222578 or Alison on 259782 for the latter.

- Sunday July 8th. Advance warning of the fourth Nottingham Peace festival, on the Embankment. Help of course needed.

Ring Kate or Ross on 582506/623182. More details in the next Citywise but meantime BOOK THAT DATE and bring it up with any groups you may be involved in.

Animal Liberation

- Up to 14th April. Campaign in World Farming are campaigning against battery egg 'farming'

- Thursday 5th April 2.30: 'George Green - Miller of Sneinton', a talk at Wollaton Hall on the miller and mathematician who owned the windmill at Sneinton currently being restored to working order.

- Wednesday 28th March: 'The Castle Museum' - a short talk to mark the publication of the new Castle Guide Book

- Saturday 31st March Launch of Midland Group video catalogue with free all day showings of their video collection at their gallery on Carlton Street. The normal hours for hiring videos after that will be Tuesday to Friday 3.00 - 7.00 and Saturday 10.00 - 5.00.

- Thursday 22nd March 7.30: 'Larzac - a victory for non violence'. Slide show and talk by Roger Rawlinson, who has written a book about the Larzac. The evening will cover the 10 year struggle of the farmers of the Larzac to stop the army from taking their land.

- Thursday April 12th 10.30 - 4.00: 'Housing Problems', conference called by Rights Council of Nottingham at the Pakistan Centre, Woodborough Road. The Pakistan Centre are also organising a meeting on sheltered housing for elderly Asians. Ring them for details.

- Meetings of issue based working parties to be held at the I.C.C., Mansfield Road. Women's Centre. Thursday March 15th. 7.30 p.m. Women at Home. Tuesday March 20th. 2.00 - 4.00 p.m. Other Issues (housing, transport, violence etc.) and to form a steering group Wednesday March 21st 7.30 p.m. Women and Unemployment. Tuesday March 27th 7.30 p.m. Racism. Thursday March 29th, 7.30 p.m.

MARCH 17TH - APRIL 27TH

SOUTHERN AFRICA - THE TIME TO ACT

★ 100,000 SOUTH AFRICAN TROOPS OCCUPY NAMIBIA ILLEGALLY. BRITISH INDUSTRY OPERATES IN NAMIBIA IN CONTRAVENTION OF UN DECREE NO.1.

★ OVER 3,000,000 BLACKS HAVE BEEN UPROOTED AND DUMPED IN BARREN DESERT AREAS OF SOUTH AFRICA CALLED BANTUSTANS.

★ SOUTH AFRICA HAS LONG SUPPORTED TERRORISTS OPERATING IN THE SOVEREIGN COUNTRIES OF MOZAMBIQUE AND ANGOLA.

★ WITHIN SOUTH AFRICA THE WHOLE SOCIETY BECOMES MORE AND MORE MILITARISED IN AN ATTEMPT TO PRESERVE WHITE PRIVILEGE.



ACTIVITIES IN NOTTINGHAM

MARCH 19th - 24th: PUBLICITY BUS providing leaflets, badges, books etc. in MARKET SQUARE, between 10.00 a.m. and 4.00 p.m., MON. to SAT.

MARCH 19th, 7.30 p.m.: PUBLIC MEETING. "Stop the Apartheid War" with a prominent Anti-Apartheid speaker. At the International Community Centre, Mansfield Rd.

MARCH 21st: NATIONAL LOBBY OF PARLIAMENT. Write to your MP expressing concern at the situation in Southern Africa. Ask to talk to him/her at Westminster. Coach details from Mick (584722) or Liz (624399).

MARCH 24th: CELEBRATION of the ANC's Year of Women.

Films, slide show. Central Library, Angel Row. 10.00 a.m. - 2.00 p.m.

Social - music, food, speakers. Pakistani Centre, Woodborough Road. Women only, 7.00 - 10.00 a.m.

JOIN NOTTINGHAM ANTI-APARTHEID

NAME ADDRESS

INDIVIDUALS: £1.00. ORGANISATIONS: £5.00. Return to G. Morris, 11-04 Victoria Centre, Nottingham.

Ken Coates' media meditations

Jon Brain talks to Labour's prospective Euro MP

COMING AS HE DOES from that section of political life which the press is fond of labelling the 'loony left', Ken Coates's views on the media are understandably forthright. Expelled from the Labour Party in 1965, partly because of his outspoken opposition to the Vietnam war which embarrassed Harold Wilson, he became a co-founder of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation. Re-admitted to the party in 1969, he unsuccessfully fought the South Nottingham seat in last June's General Election. Undeterred, he is now preparing to fight the seat again, this time for the European Parliament. In this exclusive interview, he gives his opinions on the current state of the British media and the need for their reform.

Citywise: The topic of the media and their role in our society has long been a favourite hobby-horse of the Left. Since the 1983 elections, however, it has become a particularly dominant theme in post-mortems of the Labour Party's defeat. How far do you think the media were responsible for Labour's abysmal showing last June?

Ken Coates: I would hesitate to give the media a formative role - not because the media are innocent of very serious crimes but because the Labour movement should know by now what it is up against and should have thought through its avoiding action. If you know that you are going to be mugged, it is foolish to walk straight into that mugging.

Citywise: To what extent do you feel that the media distort the Left's own image of itself? By this I mean the Labour Party's efforts to remain 'moderate', seen most clearly in the expulsion of Militant?

Ken Coates: The media are partly responsible for the way any of us see ourselves. But it is a mistake of the Labour movement to run in front of media pressure because the media seldom engage in democratic process.

Citywise: Why do you think this is?

Ken Coates: The newspapers are owned by seven multi-national companies. In fact, the entire means of communication in this country is monopolised to a degree which is incompatible with a maintenance of our freedom. Given this situation, it would be highly surprising if the press reflected democratic pressures. In last year's elections, no newspaper was willing to give unequivocal support to the main opposition party. Most were not even prepared to report the campaign objectively.

Citywise: Do you include the Guardian and Daily Mirror in this criticism?

Ken Coates: The Guardian and the Mirror reported certain things objectively but never gave overwhelming support to Labour.

Citywise: It has been suggested that the Labour Party must have its own newspaper if it is to overcome these problems. Would you go along with this?



Ken Coates: Yes, the Party must have its own paper. At the moment we have exclusively conservative media. There is nothing to balance this - a Labour newspaper is a necessity.

Citywise: But wouldn't the existence of such a paper simply add to the bias in the media which you criticise? Surely, propaganda is equally unsavoury regardless of whether it emanates from left or right of the political spectrum?

Ken Coates: I hope that a Labour newspaper would set an example of objective reporting. But even if it was bad, at least it would lend some correction to the appalling lack of balance that exists at present.

Citywise: This seems a rather negative solution. What about the reform of the media as a whole? Are there any ways the present situation can be altered?

Ken Coates: We need to change the basis on which all newspapers operate. I would like to take the matter to the Monopolies Commission and ask for guidelines to be set up which would compel change in

directorship and controlled ownership. Secondly, I would demand the provision of a right of reply. It is an outrage that huge areas of a newspaper can be given over to personal attacks without any right of reply to those attacked. Above all, there ought to be a wider degree of pluralism. Why should all news be controlled by one editor? Why not have a different editor for each day of the week? Why not have a separate editor for separate news broadcasts? Why not give different people access to the creation of discussion programmes? We need to widen the thing out and allow more people to get their points of view across. All the printing and information technology is there to make real local communications a real possibility, yet we still have the most centralised media in the world. It is necessary to take action because we are verging on danger.

Citywise: Do you see any role for papers such as Citywise in this overhaul?

Ken Coates: I think the local alternative press has a crucial role to play in our community. Once Citywise can overcome its distribution problems, it will make a valuable contribution to the media in Nottingham.

Citywise: That sounds like a thinly veiled reference to the Nottingham Evening Post. You, of course, have refused to speak to the Post ever since the 1978 NUF dispute.

Ken Coates: There are times when morality imposes a certain type of behaviour. What the Evening Post did five years ago was totally beyond the bounds of what is acceptable in a free society. Consequently, I do not talk to the Post, but even if I did they would doubtless report me the same way they do now. I have never expected to find objective news in the Evening Post and I don't think that that situation is likely to change. ●

Teenie Tories

IT'S HARDLY surprising that the Young Conservatives at Nottingham University are regularly in the news these days - they've always been nutters, although inviting David 'Hitler was a nice guy' Irving to speak is crass, even for them. Citywise has been given further evidence of a long-standing absence of grey matter in the Teenie Tory heads.

The story is that two or three years ago, one Ian Gilmour, once no. 2 at the Foreign Office, addressed one of their meetings. A yawning gap became apparent between Gilmour and his audience when he kept referring to Zimbabwe and his questioners kept referring to Rhodesia. Gilmour was also clearly bemused by the ya-boo lot wanting to offer military aid to Solidarnosc - something which the Polish union would be horrified at.

However, the point of this tale concerns economic policy. A questioner innocently asked Gilmour whether a poster on the

Teenie Tories' stall represented an official Conservative position. From where he was sitting he couldn't see the poster, so a young lad, who looked more like a representative from the Official Acne Party, took the poster to where it could be seen by Gilmour and his audience.

Our pasty friend was greeted by rapturous applause from the audience and, to give Gilmour his due, an 'Oh God, how do I get out of here' look from him. The poster in question was illustrated by the torso of a woman wearing only a bra, the straps of which were about to be cut by a pair of scissors over the caption 'Support the Cuts'.

What's most worrying is that these bomb-happy, public school vandals will become the Tory Party of tomorrow. Hmm, given Gilmour's exile to the ranks of the wets, maybe it would be more accurate to say that these yobbos in expensive suits are the Tory Party of today... yuch. ●

Nottingham's Isthmus Films return from Nicaragua

SANDINO LIVES - STRUGGLE CONTINUES

IT IS NOW OVER four years since the overthrow of Somoza's brutal dictatorship in Nicaragua. In that time the Nicaraguan people have raised living standards and repaired much of the damage to the economy caused by the civil war and years of corruption and neglect. They have also mounted far-reaching and successful campaigns to improve standards of health care and educate the people by mobilising the energy of Nicaragua's youth.

Despite this (or perhaps because of it), the Reagan government in the USA has claimed that the Sandinista régime is an oppressive dictatorship and a threat to freedom. They have organised and financed a campaign of sabotage and terrorism against Nicaragua led by ex-Somoza supporters and ousted revolutionaries - the contras. This campaign is now creating serious obstacles to the country's progress.

The Nottingham-based Isthmus Film Productions recently returned from three weeks filming in the US's backyard, and *Citywise* spoke to the three members of Isthmus - Karen, Harvey and Dave - about the impression they got of the situation in revolutionary Nicaragua and the validity of some of the American claims. In making the film, they talked to workers, peasants, activists, priests, government ministers and many more others.

Citywise: You were there for the 50th anniversary of the death of General Augusto Sandino, a Nicaraguan leader who defeated the American invasion in the 1920s and a symbol of the Nicaraguan revolution. How was the occasion marked?

Dave: There was a massive rally. There were about 150,000 people there. The details for the elections were announced there. Everywhere we went, every time we came to a town, there were banners and flags celebrating 50 years of Sandino. There was a festival going on in the whole country. Even two weeks after the rally they were still celebrating.

Karen: Everywhere you heard people chanting: 'After fifty years, Sandino lives and the struggle continues.' It's written on every wall.

Citywise: The Americans, with the support of the Thatcher Government, have condemned the Sandinista regime for its alleged suppression of criticism, particularly from opposition papers. Do you think this is a fair point?

Karen: Many people are openly critical of press censorship. The government can censor economic and military details and any article which 'undermines the revolution', which could cover almost anything. Even *Barricada*, the pro-Sandinista paper, finds it difficult sometimes.

Dave: The articulate criticism of censorship comes from pro-revolutionary papers. Criticism from opposition papers is very

negative. The two main changes the major opposition paper, *La Prensa*, demands in press censorship laws are to be able to exploit female sexuality in advertising, and to be able to exploit Xmas for commercial gain. They actually put that in the paper! *La Prensa* is presented in the west as a serious opposition paper. In fact it is a very sensationalist paper.

Harvey: That's true. For example, *La Prensa* published a story claiming that as a result of eating eggs imported from Cuba, a woman gave birth to a chicken. *Barricada* was forced to report the results of scientific tests on the chicken to refute the story.

Citywise: The Americans also accuse the Sandinistas of attacking religion. To what extent do you think this is true?

Harvey: We met the Minister of Culture, who is a priest. We asked him about the claim that religion is being suppressed. He said that half the junta are practising Christians. It didn't worry him that young people are not going to church any more, because they live Christian lives, caring for each other, being good neighbours.

Citywise: The US-backed contras are escalating their campaign of economic sabotage and blockade against Nicaragua. What are the political aims of the contras' campaign?

Harvey: The contras don't seem to have any alternative political programme. They have cynically worked out what the main achievements of the revolution are - health care and education - and they've decided to attack these. We were told that fifteen hospitals have been destroyed by the contras. They can't hold any territory, they just burn the crops and attack the campesinos (peasants). The contras murder

workers in the health and education campaigns to try to terrorise other volunteers. But every time one is killed there is always another to replace them. The people won't give up and they won't be terrorised. Transport is the Nicaraguan's biggest problem. There is an acute shortage of vehicles and petrol. The bulk of their oil comes through one port, Corinto, and by mining the harbour, the contras are trying to frighten off foreign ships. This week, a Panamanian freighter and two fishing boats and a Dutch-owned dredger were destroyed off the Nicaraguan coast. Ultimately, the aim is to stop people having the means to get to the polling stations, to force the Sandinistas to call off the elections, which is ironic because the contras claim they are fighting for democracy.

Citywise: What effect is the contras' campaign having on the people of Nicaragua?

Karen: It causes a lot of frustration. They have sewing machines but can't get needles, there's a shortage of everything: paper, pens, glass, milk, you name it.

Harvey: Apart from causing an estimated \$100m of damage to the economy, the main effect of the contras' attacks has been to solidify the resistance to external pressure. Even the people we talked to who weren't pro-FSLN were still part of the revolution. They are all prepared to fight to defend the revolution, that's their first priority.

Citywise: How did people react to the possibility of an American invasion?

Harvey: No-one expects an invasion, at least not until after the American elections in November.

Dave: We quickly became aware that a lot of people are carrying guns and that the





Photo: Wilson/Isthmus

reason is that these people are fighting for their very existence. Their lives are threatened. If the contras were to succeed or the Americans to move in successfully, there would be a bloodbath. Charmorro (a militia commander in Matagalpa) said to us, quite humorously, 'Those American boys would be making a big mistake if they came to Matagalpa.' He wasn't aggressive about it. They are all calm, getting on with their everyday lives, but they are ready and you know if they were attacked they would be ferocious.

Citywise: You've mentioned the elections. While you were in Nicaragua, the plans for the elections were announced. What did the people you spoke to think about the prospect of an election?

Karen: Many people we talked to weren't interested in the elections. They said, 'We had our elections in '79. We don't see why we should go to all the trouble for world opinion.'

Harvey: More than that, they are suspicious of elections because they had elections under Somoza.

Karen: While we were there, a Venezuelan cabinet minister who had previously criticised the Sandinistas said that these elections would be the fairest ever held in Latin America. The result is a foregone conclusion, particularly since the voting age has been lowered to 16. The main thing people talk about in relation to the elections is the importance of 16-18 year olds being

granted the vote. Young people have been the driving force of the revolution.

Citywise: What importance did the FSLN attach to international solidarity?

Dave: International solidarity is crucial to them, and they placed special emphasis on British solidarity.

Harvey: Carlos Nunez (one of the FSLN leaders) said that Britain is very important. While several EEC countries have given aid independently, the Thatcher government has blocked aid from the EEC as a whole. Also, Britain's support for Reagan's policy has made it that much easier for the US administration to continue the war against Nicaragua. If you could change that support at least to disapproval, if Western Europe was united in opposition, it would be much harder for Reagan to carry on.

Dave: The EEC aid programme is one area where direct pressure should be brought to bear by whatever means possible.

Karen: D'Escoto (the Foreign Minister) told us that the most important thing we could do was to take back the truth, to tell people what was really happening in Nicaragua and counter the disinformation put out over here. The people said things like 'Can you send us some paper' or 'We haven't got any sewing needles'. In fact the solidarity campaign in Britain is planning to send a container full of materials. They will be fund-raising to fill and then send the container. That will be the first one to go from Britain. Solidarity groups in Canada

and in each state of the US send several every year. Nicaragua desperately needs this aid.

Citywise: You mentioned American solidarity groups. Is there a strong movement in the US?

Karen: There are a lot of solidarity groups in the US, but information about them is almost non-existent. Thousands of Americans go to Nicaragua every year to pick coffee and cotton, and some work in the most dangerous areas. It's interesting that in all the time we were in Nicaragua we saw no Cubans and only a handful of Russians, but we saw plenty of Americans.

Citywise: Do you think the film you are going to produce can help the Nicaraguan people in any way?

Dave: We've talked about editing the film in a number of different ways. In terms of education, it is so striking that it is such a young revolution, they are such young people. We can bring that into the film. If young people here could identify with the youth of that country...

Harvey: I don't think we should just be countering the disinformation that is put out. I hope we have captured the sense of total commitment and absolute solidarity among the people.

Another solidarity trip to Nicaragua is being organised for April - costing around £800. Details from the Nicaragua Solidarity Campaign, 20 Compton Terrace, London N1. Tel 01-226 6747. ●

Women's centre on the move

NOTTINGHAM IS going to have a new women's centre! The premises of 32a Shakespeare Street have long been felt to be inadequate and off-putting. There are no facilities for women who want to drop in to find out what is going on, have a relaxing cuppa and chat. There is no room for large groups to meet, or for new groups to form. The rooms are cramped and the groups who use the building are overworked.

So discussions began last year to try to solve the problem. The obvious answer was to look for larger, more attractive premises. There was an offer made of £40,000 to buy somewhere, but it proved impossible to find a suitable building which was in the city centre and therefore easily reachable by all women. While looking for somewhere to buy, a building for rent was found on St James's Street. This turned out to be ideally suited for a multi-purpose women's centre.

At a series of open meetings for all interested women to discuss getting a new

women's centre, many ideas and plans were talked about. A list of priorities and needs was produced. As the building on St James's Street fulfils most of these, it was decided to investigate all the ins and outs in order to work out if it should be taken on. There was the question of whether to take on the whole building or one third of it. After considering how many women's groups were interested, and looking at the new sources of income a large building would provide, it was decided to go ahead with the whole lot!

Many of the groups who use the present women's centre feel the need to have space for social activities so more women would want to come in. Because it is a large building, it will be possible for a variety of groups to have space in it. The ground floor is fully accessible to wheelchairs and prams and half of the first floor could easily be made accessible too.

These are some of the ideas that have come out of meetings so far: café, lounge, crèche, discos, self-defence classes, theatre

and dance performances, lesbian centre, Asian women's celebrations, workshops, jumble sales and nearly new clothes stall, craft and book shop, printing room, games room with pool tables, conferences and festivals.

There have been several very positive meetings with council officers and some members of the County and City Councils are already behind the plans to get a new women's centre. Plans and costings for the few alterations needed are being drawn up so that applications can be made to pay for them to be done. It is hoped that the City and County Councils will be able to make grants towards the running costs. The rest of the cost will be met by groups paying rent for rooms and fund-raising activities (as above).

The women's centre is going to be registered as a charity so that grants from trusts can be applied for more easily. A deed of covenant is being drawn up which will enable women to get tax relief on donations made to the women's centre. Women's Aid have made an application to the Inner City Programme which looks likely to be successful. This includes a sizeable amount towards premises. Also an application is being made to get 6 part-time workers under the Man(sic)-Power Services Commission Community Programme. These would be two crèche workers, two receptionists and two information and publicity workers. Enquiries have been made to the Co-operative Development Agency to see what help they could give.

Women are needed to contribute ideas, time and enthusiasm in order that the new women's centre can open sooner. If you have any bits of information that you think would help, write to The New Women's Centre Group, 32A Shakespeare St, or 'phone 411475 on Mondays 7-9 p.m. or Thursdays 10-12 a.m. If you want further details or to talk this over, 'phone the above number. ●

Housing benefits: poor will pay

By John Hannam

THE NEWS OF THE WORLD told its readers in February that 'there was to be a small cut of £230 million in Housing Benefit' and announced that 'we can't go on living more and more off other people's backs'.

Housing Benefit is paid to 48,000 households in Nottingham alone - 7,500 are owner-occupiers; 8,000 are private tenants and 32,000 are council tenants. This is one half of all council tenants in Nottingham.

The Housing Benefit Scheme is the most complicated welfare benefit yet devised. Yet in April it will become more complex and the rate of benefit will be cut as a government economy measure. There will be further cuts in November this year.

A single pensioner with an income of £77 a week and rent and rates of £23 a week will lose £2.33 from April and £3.32 from November.

A family with one child at school and a 17 year old daughter at work, and who have an income of £135 a week, will lose £2.95 a week in April and £7.42 a week from November if their income is £135 a week.

In April there will be a number of changes:

A family with an 'adult non-dependent' living in their home will have their housing benefit payment reduced by £8.20 a week (the current reduction is £6.55 a week). This is a reduction of £6.15 plus £2.05 a week for rates. An 'adult non-dependent' is someone living at home who has their own income, such as a working son or daughter.

From April, these deductions will apply to an 'adult non-dependent' between 18 and pension age, rather than from the age of 21. The presence of a working 18-20 year old will mean a loss of an extra £2.65 worth of housing benefit a week after April.

The rate at which housing benefit is reduced as income rises changes from 21% to 26% (rent) and 7% to 9% (rates).

18-20 year olds living at home who get supplementary benefit currently receive £3.10 a week towards their housing costs. This will stop from April.

The allowance for children used in calculating housing benefit was to have been increased in April. This has been deleted.

Pensioners lose an average of 59p a week, whilst others will lose 70p a week in April. No-one will gain from this new scheme and many people will lose substantial amounts of money.

Child Poverty Action Group is very concerned about the effects of these cuts on families with children in particular.

Child Poverty Action Group meets at 7.30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month at Nottingham CVS in Mansfield Road. New members are welcome. ●

A future for Asian girls

By Jasvinder Chana, Project 'Pehchan'

AS A YOUTH and community worker in Nottingham working specifically with Asian girls and young women, it has become increasingly apparent to me that Asian girls and young women are labelled as 'problems' by many people. They are being stereotyped as either too meek and mild or as rebelling against their so-called 'backward' parents - by running away from home, or being nuisances to their parents because they are not allowed out. Each stereotyped generalisation poses problems for social workers, teachers and youth and community workers, and other white workers in the so-called helping and caring professions.

Normally youth workers with Asian girls are supposed to help them with their 'innumerable problems' at home and in their communities. Their way of thinking is far from the reality of many young Asian

women's lives. What is of more concern to these women is the racism they experience in schools and on the streets. For example, Wahida said: '... some of our teachers are really prejudiced, they treat us very differently when they speak to us from other kids in school - it's just different and not very nice.'

Quite clearly it is not the Asian family and/or culture that is the problem but the racist structures and institutions of society which are responsible for hindering Asian girls and young women from having equal access to opportunities and resources.

In contrast to the usual approach of 'helping the girls with their problems', the emphasis of my work with Asian young women has been and is to facilitate the positive development of cultural, racial and sexual consciousness through activities and discussion in a non-threatening, non-intimidating and relaxed atmosphere. ●

CAMPAIGNS

Attacks on women's reproductive rights

By Paula Brady

YOU MAY REMEMBER the attempt by Ms Gillick last year to obtain a court ruling which would have made the provision of birth control to a young woman under the age of 16 unlawful without parental consent. Although she lost the case, she is appealing against the decision - the appeal will be heard in March or soon after. If she wins, the regulations or the law may have to be changed.

Ms Gillick's supporters have organised 600 separate petitions which have been presented by MPs to Parliament. (Mrs T, I understand, has given her personal approval.) Almost nothing has been heard from our side.

DHSS regulations are already extremely strict, and further restriction on young women's rights to obtain contraceptive advice and information, drugs or devices will only result in an increase in unwanted pregnancies. *It is important that our opposition is heard now.*

If you feel that you could collect signatures and send a petition to your constituency MP, please contact me on 864655. It takes a little time, but it's not difficult and I'd appreciate help. ●

Gays: The Time Has Come

By the Labour Campaign for Gay Rights

"1984 - THE TIME Has Come" was the theme of a Labour Party fringe meeting on gay rights at the Labour Party Local Government Conference held in Nottingham over the weekend of 4th February. Over 40 delegates and visitors were reminded of ways in which lesbians and gay men are systematically discriminated against in law, education, provision of housing and other local government services.

Jo Richardson MP opened the meeting by saying that lesbians and gay men were positively discriminated against and excluded from jobs in ways that other disadvantaged groups were not. In 1981 the Labour Party had produced a discussion document, 'The Rights of Gay Men and Women', but had generally fudged the issue since then. The Labour Party had taken an unequivocal stand on hanging, why not on gay rights? Jo Richardson was the recent sponsor of the Private Member's Bill on Sex Equality and took the opportunity to include a clause outlawing discrimination against lesbians and gay men in employment.

Chris Smith MP spoke on police entrapment and the law. He also



Jo Richardson MP and Hugh Robertson at the gay rights fringe meeting. Photo: Rentasnap.

contrasted the harsh immigration laws and practices in Britain with those in some other countries. He called for joint housing tenancies and automatic inheritance rights of tenancy on death of a partner and spoke of the problems facing teenage lesbians and gay men in an exploitative housing market, relating his own experiences as the former Chair of the Housing Committee in an Inner London Borough.

The third speaker, Cllr. Bob Crossman, representing the Inner London Education Authority, highlighted the need to persuade local government staff that lip service towards gay rights was just not good enough. Lesbians and gay men could often be the victims of prejudice at interviews where snide remarks and subtle innuendoes often occurred. 'There is an absolute base line for lesbians and gay men in the Labour Party for gay visibility,' he said. At present out of a total of nineteen hundred Labour councillors in Greater London, only four had come out as gay. Yet even this was four times better than any other party. ●

Police Bill opposed

By Richard McCance

THE CAMPAIGN AGAINST the Police Bill culminated in a demonstration in London on 21st January. Many of the 3000 or so demonstrators were black, and there were large contingents of women and men marching under five gay banners, including a contingent from the East Midlands.

The march drew the largest number of upfront lesbians and gay men seen for a long time on straight demonstrations, so in terms of visibility this must have been one of the gay men's and lesbian movement's most successful interventions.

But the lack of Labour movement and trade union banners was criticised by a number of speakers,

including Paul Boateng from the Greater London Council Police Committee. He also said that lesbians and gays would be two of the groups hardest hit if the Police Bill became law, and he clearly had an impact on the other marchers. However, as one speaker said, it would be dangerous to establish a rank order of disadvantage when all people affected by the Bill should be using their energies not to fight each other but to fight the Bill. ●

STOP THE CITY!

ARE YOU SICK of the stockpiling of weapons and food, while people starve?

ARE YOU SICK of being called 'scrounger', but only being offered work that exploits others?

ARE YOU SICK of seeing services slashed (health care, libraries, community centres etc.)?

ARE YOU SICK OF SEXISM, THIRD WORLD EXPLOITATION, ANIMAL ABUSE, THE DENIAL OF GAY RIGHTS, ECOLOGICAL DESTRUCTION, RACISM AND POLICE VIOLENCE?

On March 29th, there will be a second 'Stop the City' day of protest in the City of London. This is the day on which the City counts its profits for the year - the day when it reckons up how well it has exploited us all. We can make it a day of protest, indignation and celebration of humanity; a day for showing our feelings about the institutions which thrive on oppression - which make a few men rich at the expense of a healthy life for this planet and all who live on it.

Last September, many different people from many different backgrounds and groups came together to non-violently protest against the profits made out of war in the centre of the financial war machine, the City of London. On March 29th, there will be a protest against the money made out of misery and death in all their forms. We will take to the streets of the City and reclaim them for life over

death, joy over fear, humanity over greed. We will call on all people working in the area to consider how the financial empires which exploit their labour also harm the rest of us. We will have fun and try to disrupt the functioning of the profit machine.

Please join us. Please come to the City with your ideas, imagination, leaflets, music and whatever you think will make this day of action enjoyable and effective.

There's no central organised plan; people are encouraged to arrange their own actions - by themselves, with friends or in special interest groups. However, there will be certain events going on which you can join in with if you're not doing anything else. Please ask the contacts below for details of these events, more suggestions for activities on the day and information about coaches to London. Get in touch if you want to know more or to help with publicity locally.

CONTACT: Box D, Mushroom, 10 Heathcote St. Tel. 788710 or 624742. ●

INVITATION TO ALL WOMEN

who are sick of their chains and their unpaid contribution to the profit system; who are fed-up with being sold useless expensive rubbish which benefits only those who make money out of it; and who have had enough of working for nothing for the sake of the family, the economy and powerful men's luxuries.

We don't want wedding dresses, scented tampons and household gadgets. We don't want to be tied to the kitchen sink or the profit machine; not with chains and not with ribbons.

On March 29th, the day when the City of London reckons up how well it has exploited women, children and men over the last year, we will **RETURN THE SYMBOLS OF OUR OPPRESSION** to their source. We will dump the unwanted 'tools of our trade' back in the City of London, right on the steps of the Old Lady of Threadneedle Street, the Bank of England. You are invited to take part in this action.

Please bring your domestic implements, contraceptives, make-up - whatever you most want to be rid of - and dump them at the Bank of England at 9 a.m. (or later if you can't make it then). Show that we know who profits from our domestic work - big business and high finance, systems which oppress us all and have their base in the City of London. Let's show up the Bank of England as the heap of rubbish it really is.

A group of women from Nottingham are planning to take this action further, with street theatre showing the value society places on women. We would also like to encourage women musicians and performers to entertain us while we dump. If you are interested, please contact: Kate 623182 or Chris 624742. ●

The local NAC group

By Paula Brady

IT WAS TO DISCUSS what is happening locally that I went along to a National Abortion Campaign meeting at the Women's Centre.

Following the national division last October when NAC split into two groups (those who felt that 'Free Abortion on Demand - A Woman's Right to Choose' was still a long way off and that it was important to continue campaigning around the single issue of abortion [they've remained in the NAC], and those, on the other hand, who felt that the NAC had become complacent about what 'A Woman's Right to Choose' means and that they needed to broaden out and campaign around issues that would make that choice a real one [they've formed the Women's Reproductive Rights Group]), the local NAC group found itself in some disarray. Only very recently has the group begun to gain momentum again.

Mary, Margaret and Jane were at the meeting which I attended. Margaret talked about the NAC conference which she had attended the previous weekend. Workshops had been used to develop themes such as how we campaign locally and nationally around cuts in the NHS, practical measures to counter attacks on abortion facilities, and the experience of black women and young women. They talked to me about what they did as a group. Apart from meeting at fortnightly intervals to discuss issues and what

they can best put their energy into, they give talks to women's groups, take part in debates at the University and Polytechnic, and they've also produced a leaflet which gives practical information on how to go about obtaining an NHS abortion.

In Nottingham, they explained, the Family Planning Association operate a central referral system: if a GP is reluctant to refer a woman for abortion, the woman can contact Huntington House and they, apparently, will offer the first available appointment at an FPC. A system of self-referral would, of course, eliminate this problem, but women have a long way to go before they are deemed capable of making a responsible decision - albeit about their own bodies.

A Day Care Clinic operates two days a week at Queen's Medical Centre, but poor facilities in the county as a whole force women into the city, and consequently waiting lists grow. Plans to open a new day care unit at the City Hospital are under way - but anti-abortionists are campaigning against this (they seem to believe that the physical presence of a day care unit will lead to an increase in the numbers of women having abortions - almost as if women will, because the facility is there, feel obliged to use it!).

The group is, of course, committed to the establishment of proper day care facilities - and not just in Nottingham. Like NAC nationally, they would like to see uniform provision across the country with women able to refer themselves. This way, women could

avoid the delays which so often lead to them having to undergo 'late' abortions. They'd also like to see improvements in the provision of post-coital ('morning-after') contraception.

The group is hoping to resume fortnightly meetings very soon and would welcome new faces and contributions. If you'd like to go along, or find out more, 'phone Jane on 822206. ●

World Development & the European Elections

By the World Development Movement

MENTION JUNE'S European Parliament elections to most people and the chances are they either won't know what you're talking about or they'll consider them a joke. Despite this, the World Development Movement is hoping to use the occasion to raise the issue of how EEC policies affect the Third World.

To give just two examples:

(1) The EEC goes on encouraging farmers to grow more sugar beet, making things increasingly difficult for sugar cane producers in the Caribbean and elsewhere.

(2) There is the Multi-Fibre Agreement, which limits textile imports from the Third World whilst letting the US and Eastern Europe bring in as much as they like.

The local WDM is meeting

candidates in the Nottingham Euro-constituency, having started off with Ken Coates, prospective Labour candidate.

Speaking to the group, Mr. Coates described the EEC as 'a nonsense'. He thinks it will break up soon due to the conflicting interests of member states. His vision is for Socialists in the whole of Europe, not just the EEC, to work together to bring economic recovery. This could be done by setting up a triangle of trade between Europe, China and other Third World countries. European industries could adapt to meeting the huge latent demands of the Third World. This would go hand in hand with helping them to build up their own industries and exploit their resources for their own benefit.

Ken Coates sees the current EEC policies as amounting to economic imperialism and encouraging economic dependence. These would be increased if, as he expects, Europe expands exports of nuclear power technology to the Third World; something which would also have implications for the spread of nuclear weapons.

On foreign aid (some of which goes through the EEC), Ken Coates said it should be more geared to the needs of the poorest people and that governments with a genuine concern for their people should be given preference. WDM would certainly go along with that. We might differ on the EEC, however, believing that it is here to stay, for the foreseeable future at least, and thus seeing a need to try to change what it does. ●

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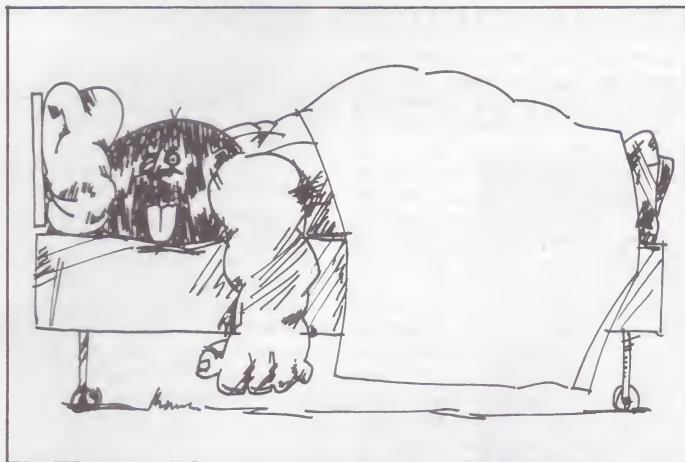


ANARCHIST



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PUBS



By Pete Golding

Part 2: A real local in town, and a country crawl by public transport

UNLESS YOU ARE very new to Nottingham, you will already be familiar with pubs such as the Trip, Bell and Yates's. I will be introducing you to some of the more out-of-the-way pubs which are well worth visiting, both in town and in the country.

This month's Town Pub is the Loggerheads in Cliff Road. Despite being only two minutes walk from the Broad Marsh Centre, this pub is so out-of-the-way as to be unknown to many city pub-goers. Perhaps this is why it is one of the few true "locals" left in town.

Cliff Road - once called Narrow Marsh - runs parallel to Canal Street and is at the foot of the cliff which marks the southern extremity of the Lace Market. The cellars of the pub are actually carved into this cliff, and there are other caves too, one of which was believed to be the original pub and was used for cockfighting. A shaft leads from the ceiling of this cave to a lookout point on the cliff face, from where a dropped stone would warn of an impending police raid on this illegal sport!

It is a Home Brewery pub, and friendly licensees Roger and Brenda serve a good drop of traditional Bitter and Mild at sensible prices. Their lunchtime meals, too, offer excellent value for money, and if you should book their skittle alley for a match with a party of friends, they will provide you with a first-class buffet for a very moderate fee - or even a pie and peas supper if preferred.

For a quiet chat in convivial surroundings, the lounge is comfortable and pleasantly decorated without being trendy or spoiled by the strange "themes" so popular with certain brewers today. The public bar is noisier - there is a jukebox and fruit machine. Cards and dummies are popular with the locals, and there is a thriving darts team. All in all, a good traditional local.

Our Country Crawl this month takes us to Caythorpe and Lowdham - two villages about nine miles east of town. Trent bus number 311

serves both villages and most Lincoln trains stop at Lowdham station, which is in between the two villages. There is a late bus back to Nottingham at 11.13 p.m. from Lowdham only.

Caythorpe boasts two pubs. The Black Horse is a splendid example of an unspoiled country inn which can have changed little over the years. Not a hint of piped music, jukeboxes, fruit machines or video games will be found here. It is a Shipstone house which has escaped "Greenallisation", and always will escape, as it is the favourite haunt of the more discerning members of the Shipstone's board.

There is a tiny public bar and a slightly larger lounge. Meals are now served here, and you can enjoy a better steak in pleasanter surroundings than any national chain steakhouse, as well as simpler dishes. The hand-pulled Shipstone's bitter is among the finest pints you'll find. The clientele here is distinctly middle-class, but don't let that put you off - it is a really fine hostelry.

The Old Volunteer, at the other end of the village, is a more down-to-earth pub - there is a pleasant lounge and a bar dedicated to pool and video games, with a good jukebox and the almost inevitable fruit machine. The beer is Kimberley, and usually a fine drop. Lowdham has four pubs, and space does not permit me to discuss them all, so I will mention my two personal favourites.

The Railway, next to the station, is a pleasant and traditional Home Ales pub. Don't go at night if you don't like organ music!

Probably the best - and hardest to find - is the World's End. You will need to take the north (Doncaster) road from the roundabout, take the first left, and left again into Plough Lane. It is one of the few Marston's pubs in the county, and as well as the well-known Pedigree sells the less popular but equally good Burton Bitter, both hand-pulled. There is a comfortable lounge and a good public bar with a nautical theme.

The last bus, by the way, goes from opposite the Magna Charta in the main road.

Cheers! ●

FOOD

By Inky

SINCE THERE are few decent winter vegetables about just now - this used to be called the 'hungry gap' in the good old days before refrigerated ships - and to reward the vegetarian lobby for their endeavours, I thought this month I would talk about some obvious and some not quite so obvious vegetables.

Fennel is one of those rather splendid vegetables that seem to have become a lot cheaper over the last few years and is now quite common (if in trouble head for an Italian delicatessen). Just trim the top stalks and the discoloured base of the stalk, quarter, and then steam/boil until tender (10-15 mins). Nice with lemon/parsley/butter. Fennel has quite a pronounced aniseed taste, but this will fade as it cooks - don't overcook or the fennel will become mushy and rather tasteless. You can also eat raw - rather overpowering, I think.

Globe artichokes are also to be found in Italian shops fairly cheaply. These really are in the delicacy class. Trim the discoloured tops to the spiky leaves, trim the base flat and steam in a little water - about 45 mins. They are done when the base artichoke gives slightly under pressure and the leaves pull out readily from the stalk or choke. Serve with melted butter as a dip.

The artichokes are eaten by pulling off the leaves, dipping the base and eating the fleshy part and the middle choke. Discard the stringy part of the leaf.

Sweet potatoes are found in West Indian shops mainly - and can be treated as spuds. Make sweet potato chips, boil or bake as for ordinary potatoes.

Okra (Lady's Fingers) are another ready standby - this time from Indian shops (or called Gumbo from West Indians). Try to buy evenly sized and not too large ones - they become stringy when large and old. Trim the tops and bottoms and cook whole if not too big, otherwise slice. Braise or boil with garlic (optional) and a tin of tomatoes until tender - about 15 mins.

Aubergines are just tedious.

Sweet peppers are also easily come by. They really need something with them to be worth while. Try stuffing with the usual - or the following mixture. Cook some chopped fennel, parsley, tomatoes and onions in a little oil, drain and mix with some cooked rice, moistening with lemon juice and tomato purée. Remove centre stalk and seeds carefully from peppers and stuff with mixture. Carefully prop upright in a suitable pan and bake until tender. Nice as an hors d'œuvre.

Next issue - 101 and one things to do with white sugar. ●

RAMBLING

RAMBLING ALWAYS seems to be such a peculiarly English tradition. It's something to do with the stiff upper-lip (discomfort is good for you), something to do with a work ethic (if route marches tire you out, it's because they're healthy) and something to do with the class system (dispossessed town-dwellers reclaiming their rural roots and the right to walk freely on the land).

On the scanty evidence of my own country and Jerome K. Jerome's *Three Men on The Bummel*, where he outlines the German every-50-metres-a-seat countryside, I stand by my claim to rambling being an English pastime.

Seats are not quite so regular here. Take Dovedale, for example. Sundays you'll find hosts of intrepid townies walking in England's Greenham pleasant land in gay abandon. There's a party doing some small-scale rock scrambling, on the left a group risking a drenching by taking the stepping-stones, and here's a few peering into a cave. In fact, there's an indescribable amount of green, brown and stony bits with what would be a reasonable crowd at a County match walking in, on, through or over all of it.

Ramblers come in all shapes and ages. The modes of dress range from the really committed ones with the woolly hats, sensible boots and anoraks - with map pockets - through to those with,

astonishingly, suits and gripless shoes or even skirts and high heels. There's a little friendly snobbery between the wearers of different types of clothes, of course.

At Dovedale, the trick is to walk 5 miles up-river, where you'll find a nice café or, thoughtfully, a wooden shelter with seats for those with their own sannies and thermos in their napsack. And then you walk back again. Naturally this bit's only for those who wear their socks outside their trousers. The softies will have gone for a healthy 15 minutes and then back to the car with a plastic cup of tea available from the snack bar.

It interests me that most people who go to these areas of natural beauty don't get more than 300 yards from the car park. This enables the countryside arrangers to make interesting little areas within that limit, giving people the feel of the countryside and allowing the control of erosion and the safeguarding of flowers and wildlife (assuming the hardy walkers are well-behaved and not too numerous). This also enables some canny people to make a mint out of car-park fees, teas, Mars bars, postcards and souvenir keyrings.

I would end with a suitably inspiring quotation, but all I can find is William Congreve saying 'I nauseate walking; 'tis a country diversion, I loathe the country'. But then, how many people have heard of William Congreve? ●

MUSIC

LOCAL MUSIC ALIVE AND WELL

By Juris Jostins

SO THERE WE WERE: the Old Maltcross - of which initial mention must be made. A recently re-opened old music hall, decorated by an incredibly tasteless mural, the strangest stage - seven feet off the floor and the size of a bathroom - the whole a scaled down Yates's with a glass roof.

Given the unappealing élitist snobbery of classical music, the rip-off characteristics of most established venues and the appalling state of current pop music (epitomised by Nine and Ninety Red fucking Balloons), it was a pleasure to part with £1 (or as much pleasure as parting with £1 could be) to enjoy six acts crammed into three hours - normal pub prices an added bonus.

Actually, I only enjoyed five acts, arriving too late to hear Dan Weaver's guitar sounds. Jamie Crofts was letting rip with his Long Tailed Piano Music - mostly self-penned material displaying marked African influences. His vocal accompaniment to some pieces overpowered the piano somewhat, but this was the fault of the sound person rather than the performer,

and in the end I feel he deserved more than the lukewarm reaction he got from the bemused punters.

With no bugging about between acts, Fieldwork came on to play Irish music and play it very well. They did, however, remain very restrained - I would have liked to see them really let go in a foot-stomping, hand-clapping, yeehah-shouting number (or two) - although, of course, everyone's set was severely limited by available time.

Mary, of the Skulking Loafers - vocals, flute and cello - announced at the start that she was nervous, especially about reaching one particularly high note, which, I would suggest, isn't a very clever thing to say to the audience, but she needn't have worried. The Loafers started off HEAVY and got HEAVIER - but no less enjoyable for that - the combination worked well.

Right, enough of that - on with House Music, to compete with the Loafers for my favourite turn of the evening. Piano, cello, sax, trombone, two voices - there would not have been room on the stage for any more. Much of the music was improvised and reminded not just me of Rip, Rig and Panic at times; desperate, frantic and soothing, flowing and disjointed, brilliant.

And so to the last act: The Fabulous Dirt Sisters, a smaller economy version thereof. I'd seen them last nine months ago in their natural element, the Old Market Square; here in the Maltcross I must

confess to being somewhat disappointed - they couldn't command attention and didn't seem to have progressed or even changed much.

Now, if this review seems very short and bitty, that's because there is a word limit - no space to go into any of the acts in detail. The evening was similar - performers had no more than half an hour and consequently neither they nor the audience could really get into the music. And come half past ten the manager was standing for no nonsense with running over time. This was the problem, there were too many acts in too short a time for any of them to do themselves justice. However, as an idea local music evenings are a must; the potential is obviously there, public and performers enjoying themselves without the rip-off factor. More of the same and soon! ●

FESTIVAL

Rock & Reggae '84

FOR ANYBODY new to Nottingham, *Rock and Reggae* is an annual free music festival staged on the Forest Recreation Ground over a weekend in July. Organised by volunteers from the surrounding community, it aims to bring together twelve of the best local bands in a showcase

statement of just how musically rich our city is. (Money allowing, this year we shall be interspersing the musical acts with street poets, dance groups and maybe a bit of theatre.)

On site, we provide a wide range of activities and entertainments for children, including the perennial inflatables, and arrange a beer tent, and the odd fast food or ice cream stall. But this year, after the success of the Women's Centre stall in '83, we would like to arrange for more community groups to make use of our captive audience to do some fund-raising.

On a good weekend (when the sun shines), it's estimated that 3,000 people a day visit the event, providing interested groups with an ideal opportunity to sell books, food, jumble or whatever else is going to make a quid or two for their cause. We ask no ground rent, only that you provide your own table and let us know you're coming.

On Sunday last year it rained, and although this barely damped the spirits of those who stayed, stallholders should be prepared for that possibility (i.e. drenched people eat more!). An unemployed group from Leicester had the right idea when they pitched a frame tent and served from the entrance.

This year's festival is planned for 28th & 29th July (12 a.m. - 10 p.m.), so be there. If you've a stall, or for that matter are a poet or performer in need of an audience, give us a ring on 609087. Be seeing you. ●

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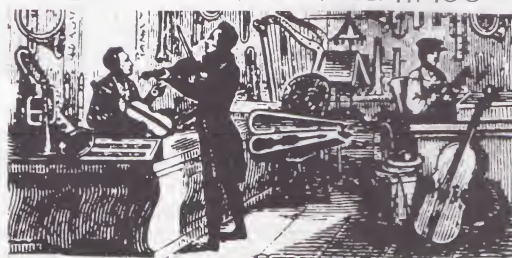
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BOOKS

LOCAL AUTHORS LOCAL PRESS

YOUR OWN STUFF PRESS was started about four years ago, with the intention of providing a publishing outlet for local writers. Since then, some nine varied books have been published. All are written in 'the authentic voice': a no-nonsense, down-to-earth style. Material was received by writers via East Midlands Arts, and some work by local schoolchildren was published.

More recently, after the start of Nottingham Writers' Workshop in January '82, publication has been, by necessity, restricted to Workshop members. As well as weekly Workshop meetings, the Press organises regular performances by writers at pubs and community centres. Some writers are more at home on stage than on the page, and have revealed hidden musical talents; so present performances deserve the title of 'cabaret'. (All enquiries to address below.)

There are about a dozen groups like Your Own Stuff Press in England, all belonging to the national Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers. In this federation, writers are encouraged to discover every aspect of 'publishing the word': by joining in performances; taking part in editing, production and distribution of books; and by helping to promote Workshop activities.

By removing the accent from profit-making, community publishers provide the opportunity for writers to regain control of their written words. Not only are our methods different from those of straight publishers - the style and content of the work we promote varies from the established 'literary norm'.

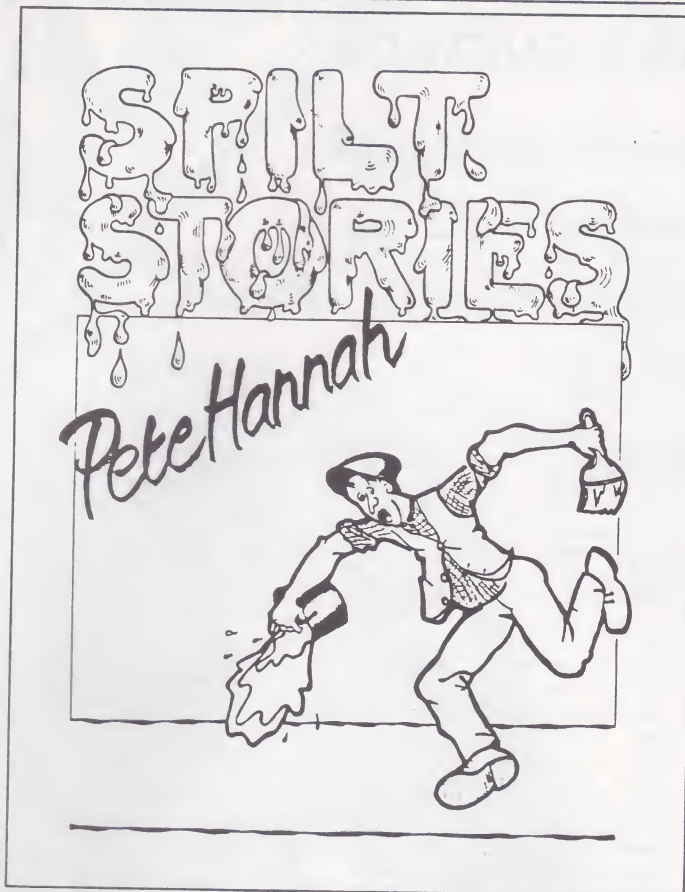
"The authentic voice of... working-class writing is the literature of the controlled and exploited. It is shot through with a different kind of consciousness from bourgeois writing. Whatever its subject matter, working-class writing, when it is any good at all, must contain in its tissues, and exude through its pores, working-class experience. Politically, the class struggle would be felt and communicated, even if indirectly, even if the writer has no such designs on the reader."

The Federation of Worker Writers and Community Publishers aim to nationalise the written word... and to make more meaningful books available to a working-class audience. Your Own Stuff Press is helping to do this, to put the 'folk' back into writing.

WENDY WHITFIELD

Looking Back: A Nottingham Woman Remembers by Kathleen Price

THE BOOK IS mainly about Kath's childhood in Sneinton in the



thirties and forties - a happy childhood. To use Kath's own words, "I thought they were such nice memories to have in one's mind, I would write them down and share my thoughts."

The stories are small pieces - slices, if you like, of life. Set slightly before and during the Second World War, they represent a smaller, secret world. The world of the poor child. They also show what a small dint great events made on their laborious, hand-to-mouth existence.

The stories are at once funny and poignant. *Bath Night*, where all the children of the family, boys and girls, have to queue up in the kitchen to share the same bathwater; none of them wanting to follow brother Joe who peed in the water... even though Mam told them it was good for the complexion! *Red Light*, where Kath believed she would have a baby if she kissed a boy, or *Black Army*, where during an air raid the kids are more scared of the army of black-clock beetles scuttling for cover in the kitchen than they are of Hitler's bombs.

To me, they evoke an era that was fast fading as I grew up. They put me in mind of stories told to me by my Mam, who experienced an almost identical childhood in Radford. Most important of all, the stories speak of the state of mind that prevailed - the inherent stoicism of the children in the face of the never-ending toil and "making-do" that went on in those days, especially by mothers.

There is also a feeling of warmth in them and, despite the harsh setting, a certain nobility.

I did, however, feel some frustration while reading the book because it is so fragmented. I felt as if I was only being allowed tiny peeks and glimpses at what was possibly a massively involved story.

For example, some of the stories, though only ten lines long, read like the synopsis of novels - novels which, I fear, will never be written.

Perhaps Kath, like many of her generation, feels this same frustration. As she herself writes: "I could burst with the feeling of wanting and wishing I could tell them today what I felt then."

Spilt Stories by Pete Hannah

A COLLECTION OF seven stories, mainly factual, but Pete admits that he played around with the facts a bit, because, as he puts it: "real life is often too bizarre to be believable".

Pete traces his life through the lives of those close to him and the experiences of growing up in Nottingham. From childhood to adolescence to manhood, humorous stories of encounters with strangers, incidents at work, pub rituals. Reflections of real people in real circumstances.

Every story speaks of the complexity of relationships with parents, friends, mates at work. Nobody stands accused and the finger is not pointed at anybody. But one cannot fail to see the authentic working-class experiences filtering through.

Pete works as a groundsman for the local council, and most of his stories were written on the spot, e.g.

in the pub, next to a big warm boiler, in a wooden hut full of bags of lime, in a cold cricket pavilion etc. No bursaries to the Caribbean or big cash incentives from big publishers here.

BILLY PAVLICHIS

Other Your Own Stuff recent titles are:

On the Tramp in the 1930s by Charlie Potter. £1.25.

A collection of stories about scouring the countryside in search of work in the 1930s.

From Egypt Road to Cairo Street.

66 pages of poems and short stories by local writers, illustrated by a local artist.

All the books are available from Mushroom Bookshop, other city centre bookshops and Your Own Stuff Press (18 Waterloo Road, Beeston, Nottingham NG9 2BU. Tel. 251587). Add 20p for postage.

Nottingham Writers' Workshop meets weekly: Tuesdays 7-9 p.m., second-floor meeting room at County Library, Angel Row. New members always welcome.

The Feast of Fools by Bob Hescott

THIS SHORT and very readable book gently winds its way through the events and developments of various community theatre projects that were set up in Nottingham between the years of 1973 and 1980. It is not a handbook for people who would attempt to launch similar projects but reads more like a personal diary. Unfortunately, the style, together with some very good simple "Brick" cartoons, lends itself to ignoring the more meaty problems these projects must have faced.

Beginning with the author's involvement with the Playhouse's Saturday morning drama workshops for children, the book goes on to describe other projects he became involved in - Sociable Theatre, Arrow Community Theatre, and the Nottingham Youth Theatre, to name but a few - all of which, in one way or another, were instrumental in expanding and developing the potentiality of theatre in Nottingham far beyond the confines of the established institutions.

They took the theatre into pubs, kids' homes, tenants' associations, hospitals - indeed the list is endless, and it is when describing these that the book takes on a life of its own. Even though there is a fairy tale quality to the way he mixes socio/political comment, personal reminiscences, and the description of events and characters, there is, at the same time, a touching sincerity and a genuine belief in not only the importance of community arts but also in the importance of people.

Stuart Brown

Mushroom Bookshop co-ordinates the book page. If you have any ideas for it, contact Mushroom at 10 Heathcote Street, Nottingham.

BAD NIGHT IN

Politics is like custard

By Juris Jostins

Q. WHAT'S THE difference between Leon Brittan and a trampoline?

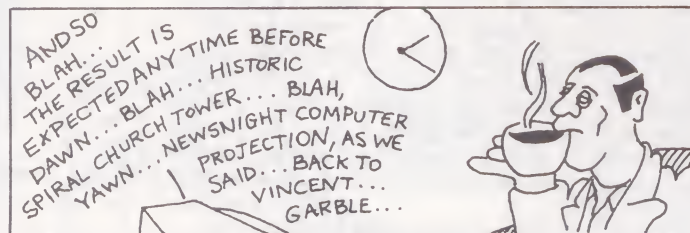
A. You take your boots off to bounce on a trampoline.

Well, that's that. Tony won, everybody's happy now. The Bring a Bottle Party, wherein there has been an outbreak of unity (patronising bastards), is, we are led to believe, ecstatic. The Alliance is dead chuffed at getting 32% of the vote (i.e. 24% of the registered electorate).

The Champagne and Strawberries Party is happy because Mr Benn's reduced majority just proves that extreme Marxist, communist, left-wing, socialist, cranky, loony, left-wing politics turn more people off than on.

The *Morning Star*, and the 57 varieties are happy to see yet another historic turning-point: now the Labour movement can finally get its shit together and "kick out the Tories".

Of course, *Newsnight* had a by-election special, starring the usual bunch. Sir Robin kept order amongst the reps from the three major parties; John Tusa must have been on something to stay awake while talking to a brace of



phenomenally boring analysts, and Peter Snow, a graduate of the David Coleman School of Commentating, filled the bits between the action with obscure statistics and deductions from the alternative representations, which, curiously, were remarkably similar.

The action in question consisted of Vincent Hannah allowing Payne and Bourne to give voice to their nigh-on slanderous paranoias of back-door communism and explain away their electoral hammering.

Robin's bunch consisted of leader Steel, deputy leader Hattersley (stick to journalism, Roy) and minion Brittan. I don't want to lower myself to *their* level and get personal, but Brittan is this month's winner of the "disgustingly smug and arrogant slimy toad" award. Tactical voting, my arse. Leon's the sort of person you imagine would use B.O.-scented aftershave.

Sorry.

Mr Steel was in fine fettle, obviously pleased that his man (how can he possibly not disown him, let alone support him?) got so many votes (few references to tactical voting from the Liberals), and not immensely displeased at being reminded by Sir Robin (to you) on national television that he was, in fact, according to the sacred opinion polls, the most popular of the large party leaders.

Oh, the sacred opinion polls. The *Newsnight* Exit Poll results were announced at the start and the next three hours were spent discussing them - these three, the two analysts, Payne and Bourne, all managed to talk and talk and say nothing at all, and come two o'clock (half an hour to go) every idea has been repeated umpteen times, everybody's looking very jaded, except the Labour supporters who burst into the Chesterfield Hall like a football

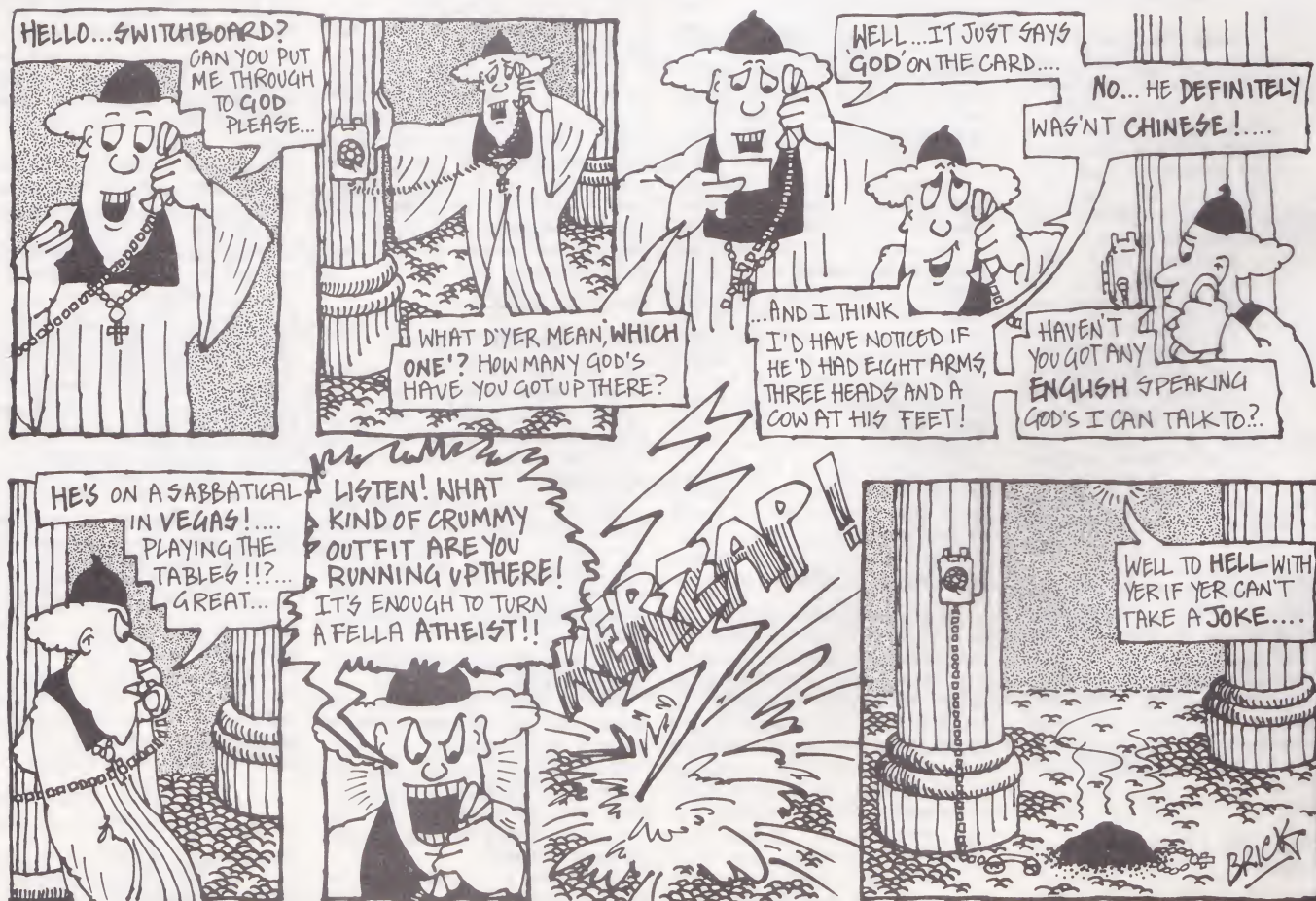
crowd; singing; fists punching the air; "Tony Benn, Tony Benn"; a real triumph for socialism. I wouldn't have been surprised to hear: "Tories are gonna get their fucking heads kicked in."

And there was, of course, finally the man himself. When they realised that he couldn't lose, *Newsnight* had to be nice to him and had presented a twee little potted biography. Vincent Hannah was now very restrained, and didn't push his pointless questions too much.

So there it was - democracy in action - the people voted, the people voted for the man. Of course, a cynic could contend that just about as many people didn't want any of them. We'll give the whole sham legitimacy by presenting a supposedly diverse field of opinion (i.e. three parties) and bore the people into accepting that this is all there is, give no voice to any opposition or alternatives.

The man's election is not a victory for "socialism", it's just a safety valve for the establishment. Just look at the stick one man got - can you imagine the shit raked up by two, three Benns? Or, as my mate Ian Wilkinson said at school dinner: "Politics is like custard."

Bad night in rating ★ ●



CITYWISE
SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

DEFEND LOCAL DEMOCRACY

SAVE OUR LOCAL SERVICES

DEMOCRACY WEEK MARCH 26-30

MON Mar 26: 12.30-1.30, County Hall.

Meeting for local government workers. Speakers:
Dennis Pettitt, Leader of the County Council;
Betty Higgins, Leader of the City Council;
Patrick Quinn, East Midlands TUC.

**MON MAR 26: 7.30pm, International Community Centre,
61B Mansfield Rd. Public meeting. Speakers:**
Betty Higgins, Leader of the City Council;
John McGuigan, NUPE.

THURS MAR 29: DEMOCRACY DAY.

National demonstration in London.
NUPE is organising coaches (tel: 603522).
NALGO is organising a train (tel 810405).

A NATIONAL WEEK OF ACTION is planned at the end of March to defend local services against central government attacks. This has been organised by the TUC in association with local authorities and community groups. March 29th is DEMOCRACY DAY with a major demonstration in London.

New laws are being pushed through Parliament this year which threaten the future of local democracy. If the government gets its way, local councils will be forced to make massive cuts in education, social services, public transport, housing, and many other areas. In some cases,

services built up over decades could disappear altogether.

The government is stepping up its attack on several fronts:

★ Every year the grant it gives to local councils is cut - forcing a choice between putting up rates or cutting services.

★ Councils are being forced to put work out for tender to private contractors, even though privatisation has proved a dismal failure in many areas.

★ Some Councils will be abolished altogether. In the true spirit of 1984, next year's elections will be cancelled for the Greater London Council and six Metropolitan County Councils. All are Labour controlled. They will be replaced by unelected boards - just like the quangos the government is supposed to be against!

★ The Rate-Capping Bill will allow the government to fix maximum levels of spending for each council. It will end the right councils have had since 1601 to set their own rates. If the Bill becomes law, electors will lose the right to choose local spending policies which differ from those of central government.

★ Even democracy itself is no longer safe with the Tories. Government Ministers have been calling for a return of the business vote, and even questioning whether the poor should have the right to vote.

Next year the government intends to 'rate-cap' up to 20 councils which they consider to be 'high-spending'. But Liverpool City Council faces the crunch this year. On March 29th, they face the choice of making 5,000 workers redundant or more than doubling the rates. Or they could adopt an illegal budget and force a confrontation with the government.

In Nottingham, neither the City nor the County Council is in the front line - yet. But both are spending well above the government targets and are eating rapidly into their reserves. If the government win against Liverpool, if they succeed in abolishing the GLC and Metropolitan Counties, if they can rate-cap the 'high spenders' - we will be next. Both councils could be forced to make massive cuts in the next two or three years.

In the centre pages we look more closely at some of the City and County services which may be threatened. We speak to workers whose jobs could be in danger - people who take a pride in the important services they provide for the local community.



Melanie Friend (Report)

On January 24th 1984, over 26,000 people marched through London to oppose the abolition of the Greater London Council and the Metropolitan County Councils. DEMOCRACY DAY on March 29th hopes to build on that by involving all councils throughout the country in a campaign against rate-capping.

SAVE OUR SERVICES

SAVE OUR SERVICES

SCHOOL MEALS

'SCHOOL MEALS are value for money,' says Pat Goring, cook-in-charge at Forest Comprehensive School and a NUPE member. 'You couldn't do a meal at home for the price.'

'Notts. County Council provide a good meals service. We work hard and everything's freshly cooked. The children appreciate the meals. They're not eating a load of rubbish. There's plenty of choice, with equal choice for Asian children.'

'If school meals were cut, we'd all be redundant,' says Pat. 'That's what worries us. A lot of kids won't get a hot dinner. A lot won't get a meal at all.'



John Birdsall

REFUSE

REFUSE COLLECTION in the City was cut from 32 rounds to 26 last year, with a big increase in workload. 'Most crews are picking up 600 to 800 bins a week more,' says Harry Cousins, GMBATU Branch Secretary. 'We've lost 24 men with no replacements. We have to carry 2 or 3 binloads at a time with the 'dinging' system (dustbins are emptied into a big plastic bin to be carried back to the vehicle).'



Work had already been speeded up over the years because there was no increase in labour to cope with extra holidays and shorter hours. 'And most men are 15 years older than when the bonus first started,' says Harry. 'It is playing hell with some of them. If they give them any more work they will have to give up. We can take care of a few of the older men on lighter jobs. But we're at saturation point.'

'Some of the younger ones want privatisation. But they don't know what they're letting themselves in for. I'd do my damndest to oppose it.'

'I can't imagine there could be a further cutback in refuse collection,' says Harry. 'We've reached the limit.'

OLD PEOPLE



MAUREEN RICKETT is a Care Assistant and a NUPE steward at Blenheim Old People's Home in Bulwell. Her work involves caring for old people - dressing, washing, toileting, feeding them - trying to do it without taking their independence away.

But many are very confused. When Maureen first went there nine years ago, there were only three 'wheelchair cases'. Now there are 24 out of 54 who need wheelchairs. 'People are living longer,' says Maureen, 'and the older they get the worse they get. Not enough homes are being built to cope with them.'

They operate a system where each member of staff has particular responsibility for five residents - this means they are better looked after. But if there were any further cuts in staff, this would have to go. 'The residents would suffer,' says Maureen. 'If staff are harassed, the residents will be harassed. You couldn't run a home with less care staff.'

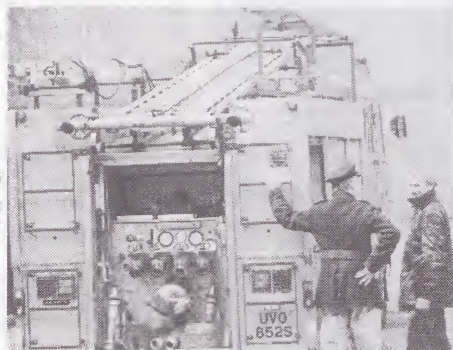
FIRE SERVICE

THE FIRE BRIGADE provides immediate assistance to the community 24 hours a day. From the simplest chimney or chip-pan fire to major industrial fires. From a child's head stuck in railings to multiple crashes on motorways. From spillages of petrol to chemical incidents requiring specialist knowledge, training and equipment. In fact any emergency endangering life or property.

Cuts in the fire service would place the community as a whole at greater risk through having a less well-equipped brigade to deal with your emergencies. It would increase the time taken to deal with your call for assistance.

The Fire Brigade helps everyone. What type of fire brigade do you want when you dial 999?

- Mick Knight, Secretary, Notts Fire Brigades Union.



John Birdsall

HOUSING

MICK STOUT is ex-convenor of the City's Housing DLO (Direct Labour Organisation), and is now a UCATT steward working for a private contractor.

'The Government's attitude to DLO's is totally unfair,' he says. 'They can't tender for work in the private sector or outside their area. But any private contractor can tender against the DLO in Nottingham.'



DLOs can't compete because of the conditions they work under such as proper sick pay.

'The lads on DLOs have got to face up to realities,' says Mick. 'They are standing by and watching their jobs go. My belief is that DLOs should be the main employer of building workers. It's the only way for secure employment, reasonable working conditions, and to work as part of the community.'

'The problem in the private sector is that companies are putting in suicidal tenders to win contracts. And they still want a profit. So building workers have to be screwed into the ground with really bad conditions.'

'It's important,' says Mick, 'that all building workers make sure the union is working for them in both private and public sectors.'

BUSES

'IF THERE ARE CUTS, it will affect the most unfortunate people,' says Harry Ball, TGWU Branch Secretary of Nottingham



John Birdsall

COLLEGES

'EDUCATION has borne the main brunt of the current cuts carried out by the Labour Group on the County Council. And it is Further Education Colleges, the traditional route for working class and black students, that have been singled out for the worst attacks. The cuts are so severe that courses will have to close.'

'The background is the Government reductions in Rate Support Grant and a loss of upto £600,000 on the underfunded Manpower Services Commission Youth Training Scheme. The future looks grim. The Tories will try to force further cuts and I am not certain that the Labour councillors will fight to stop them. The freedom of choice of underprivileged groups in the

SAVE OUR SERVICES

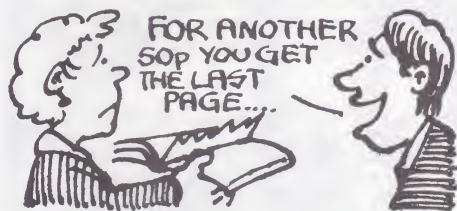
SAVE OUR SERVICES

SAVE OUR SERVICES

SAVE OUR SERVICES

LIBRARIES

TORY LINCOLNSHIRE has already started its own form of rate-capping as far as libraries are concerned. An already meagre service has been decimated by a cut of 50%.



If rate-capping takes effect, central government could attempt a repeat performance nationally.

'Hit hardest will be the local and community services, indispensable to the old, the disabled, the very young, and the unemployed.

'Cuts like these would increase the pressure from the Tory right to scrap the free library service altogether, run those centralised libraries that are left at a profit, and possibly privatise them.

'What price freedom of information?'

- Dave Muddiman, NALGO Libraries convenor for Notts, who works in St Ann's Library.

busworkers. 'Look at the service we provide for OAPs, the disabled, schoolchildren.

'The working people of this county, men or women, have a fairly cheap form of transport to and from work. If you've got a decent bus service there is contentment between the passenger and busdriver. If there are cuts it strains the contact.

'One fear is the threat of privatisation. There would be a run down in services - they would only run at the most profitable times. Services like transport should be municipalised,' says Harry, 'so profit can be ploughed back into the undertaking.

'I like to think I'm giving a service to fellow human beings. I don't like people in high places who don't know the service telling me how things should be done.'



field of education will be severely eroded.

'The Government plans to put up to a quarter of F.E. under the control of M.S.C. This could be a real disaster and lead the way to wholesale privatisation and the domination of vocational training by unadulterated employers' power.'

- Julian Atkinson, Regional Secretary of NATFHE and a chemistry lecturer at People's College.

CHILDREN'S HOMES

'WE PROVIDE a caring, professional service for children in need,' says Ann Crowder, a residential worker at Hazelwood



Community Home. 'Many children have no other place to go.

'If children's homes were cut, more pressure would be put on families to put up with intolerable situations, and women would bear the brunt of it. There would be nowhere to go for children who were abused. The Courts would send more children to borstal-type institutions.

'But the short sharp shock treatment doesn't work,' says Ann. 'They need the longer term care in children's homes to grow out of offending.'

Ann is also NALGO convenor for Social Services. She says 'it's important for all workers in local authorities to be members of their union, and be active members. But the unions can't fight for services by themselves. Unions and councils have to stand together to fight rate-capping.'

PLAY

HYSON GREEN PLAYCENTRE is one of the most recent developments in improving play facilities for children in the city. The Senior Playleader, Yvonne Senior, describes the need for the centre:

'The Playcentre in the flats complex is vital for kids age 5-13. There are no other facilities and the area is surrounded by very busy roads.

'The number of kids using it indicates the need - 40-50 per day in term time and 60-70 or more in holiday time. The kids identify with the centre and come regularly day after day to do a variety of art, craft, sports activities - indoor and out.

'If funds are cut it would mean that we would not be able to provide as varied a programme as is necessary to keep the kids occupied in their spare time.'



Nott'm Community Arts Centre

SCHOOLS



John Birdsall

'ONE OF OUR GREATEST natural resources is our young people. Education is of vital importance and shouldn't be done on a shoestring,' says Linda Jordan, a community teacher at St Ann's Well Infants School and President of Notts NUT.

'Fortunately this administration see education as extremely important and have acted accordingly. But rate-capping and central government control will mean the County's children will end up in larger classes with not enough books or other resources. Even now we are talking in terms of losing more than 250 teacher jobs.

'What price democracy when it comes to rate-capping?' asks Linda. 'It doesn't matter what the authority feels, we will get a reduction in expenditure which teachers fear.'

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

HARRY JOSHUA is Equal Opportunities Adviser for the City Council. The central purpose of his job is to ensure that the Council is not discriminating in employment and service provision in respect of black people, women, gay people, the disabled and ex-offenders.

'Anti-discrimination is important,' says Harry, 'because of the damaging effect of discrimination on groups within the community, and on the community as a whole. It is the persistent agitation of such groups that has put these issues on the political agenda.'

The Council is examining its policies and practices to determine whether or not they discriminate against disadvantaged groups, and intends to change its policies where necessary.

'But, as Harry says: 'The question arises as to whose priorities will prevail. Is it to be the priorities of the ratepayers? Or of central government? The communities or groups the policy addresses have never been highly represented in the battle for resources. Now that the Council is beginning to look at their priorities in this respect, there is a threat that those resources will never materialise.'



SAVE OUR SERVICES

SAVE OUR SERVICES

WHAT IS RATE-CAPPING?

SINCE 1979 the Government has continuously attacked council spending. It has greatly cut the grants it makes towards local spending. It introduced a complex system of estimating each council's spending needs. Spending above a 'threshold' caused the rate of grant entitlement to be reduced. When this didn't work, it introduced an additional set of arbitrary targets which trigger further grant penalties when exceeded. These penalties have been made more severe each year.

Despite all these attacks, many councils are still determined to provide the services they were elected to support. That is why the Government is now resorting to its 'final solution'.

THE RATE-CAPPING BILL

THE BILL proposes to give the Government powers to select 'over-spenders' and impose maximum levels of spending and rates. These levels will be far below what is needed to keep services going. It would be illegal for those councils to exceed their limits. A similar 'reserve' power is also proposed which could extend these limits to all councils.

If the Bill is passed, the first rate-caps will be applied in 1985. A hit list of about 20 councils is

being selected for the first wave. Most are in the poorest, most deprived inner city areas. Top of the list is Hackney - the poorest Borough in Britain.

The Government claims that these councils are an 'irresponsible minority'. Yet they have been forced to spend more because central government has put its policies of mass unemployment and high defence spending before helping the country's poorest areas.

THE SCOTTISH EXPERIENCE

Selective rate-capping is already law in Scotland. Four councils were capped in 1983: Lothian, Glasgow, Kirkcaldy and Stirling. The effect in each case was massive spending cuts. Lothian's cuts totalled £12 million, including:

- ★ 382 teaching posts lost;
- ★ 272 home helps lost, together with 45 other social work staff;
- ★ 10% bus fare increases and cuts in concessionary schemes.

The lesson is clear. Rate-capping has nothing to do with 'protecting the ratepayer' or stimulating economic recovery. It is an all-out assault on local services to ordinary people in the community.

'These proposals represent the most serious threat ever to local democracy.' - Ian McCallam, Chairman, Association of District Councils (Conservative controlled).

PRIVATISATION

IF RATE-CAPPING SUCCEEDS it will encourage even more privatisation. The Government could force more services out to tender, as it has forced the NHS to tender for cleaning and domestic services. Or councils may look to private firms to cut costs by paying lower wages, cutting holiday and sick leave entitlement, forcing up workrates and doing a worse quality job.

Many Tory councils have already handed services over to private contractors. The government is forcing councils to put most of their housing repairs and highway maintenance out to

tender. But a lot of the experience of private contractors shows that they can cost more money and provide a much inferior service.

Citywise recently published plans being made by Conservatives on Notts. County Council. If they win the 1985 elections they will consider privatising many areas, including:

- ★ School cleaning, and cleaning in other Council buildings.
- ★ School meals, and other catering.
- ★ Professional services like architects' and legal work.

Their plans make no mention of what will happen to present council workers, or the effect on quality of service, working conditions or wage levels.

THE THREAT TO DEMOCRACY

SEVERAL Government Ministers have recently started to threaten democracy itself. The Chancellor Nigel Lawson has suggested bringing back a separate vote for businessmen. He has also questioned whether people should be allowed to vote if they don't pay the full rates themselves. This could take the vote away from virtually all pensioners, single parent families, the unemployed, and low income families. It could also take the vote away from all women who are not the head of household paying the rates. It would take us back to the last century.

Some have gone further. A

leading Tory thinker Roger Scruton, writing in *The Times* recently, proposed the replacement of all elected councils with boards of 'responsible citizens of substance'. This may seem far-fetched, but it has already happened - in London's Docklands where local councils have had many of their planning powers taken away and handed over to a Development Corporation appointed by the Secretary of State. Earlier plans for jobs, houses, schools, hospitals, etc for local people have been ditched, and replaced by the interests of private business developers.

SOME GOVERNMENT LIES EXPOSED

LIE NO.1 The government says that local spending is out of control.

THE TRUTH. In real terms (allowing for inflation) total council spending fell by over 3% between 1978 and 1983. Over the same period central government spending rose by 20% - mostly because of increases in unemployment benefit and defence spending!

LIE NO.2. The government says that councils have put up the rates.

THE TRUTH. It is the government which has forced up the rates by cutting the Rate Support Grant it gives to local councils. In 1977/78, government grants covered 66% of council spending. By 1983/84 this was down to 53%.

LIE NO.3. The government says that rate increases hit jobs.

THE TRUTH. The government has never given any evidence to show that rate rises hit jobs. And it agrees that rates are only 1% of industrial costs. Notts. County Council recently looked at unemployment figures in several counties from 1979 to 1983. They found that different increases in rates had no effect on increases in unemployment. In Notts., unemployment increased by 29,000 between May 1979 and September 1981 - when we had the lowest rate of any Shire County. Since the big rate rise in September 1981, the increase in unemployment has been only 9,000. The evidence shows that the main causes of mass unemployment are central government policies, not local policies.

ABOLITION

NOT CONTENT with the rate-capping handcuff, the Government is trying to bulldoze through another major constitutional attack. It intends to abolish the Greater London Council and all the Metropolitan County Councils (Tyne & Wear, West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, Greater Manchester, Merseyside and West Midlands). 18 million people will lose their right to a democratically elected government for their metropolitan areas. London will become the only European capital without a city government.

The Tories claim that abolition will save ratepayers' money and end unnecessary duplication of services. In fact every independent report published so far shows that abolition will cost

money. Councils will be replaced by a bureaucratic mess of unelected boards and joint arrangements.

The real reason is to do away with those councils which have offered the most resistance to Government policies. The GLC and the 'Mets' have become centres of political opposition, developing successful new alternatives, for example in the fields of job creation and cheap bus fares.

Abolition will destroy a whole tier of Labour-controlled government, and deny people the right to vote for local policies. It will increase central government control and open the way for more privatisation. It is an attack on democracy itself. If these councils are abolished, democratic control of other councils will also be threatened.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- ★ Write to your MP at the House of Commons urging them to oppose the Government's policy.
- ★ Press the City and County Councils to support a local campaign.
- ★ Get the issue discussed in your trade union, voluntary group, or political party.
- ★ Support the events in the Week of Action (see details on front page).

ANY FIGHTBACK against rate-capping needs to involve the workers within public services and the users of those services, as well as councillors. For example:

- ★ In Glasgow and Newcastle, joint shop stewards committees have been formed to co-ordinate action across all sections of the workforce.

- ★ In Sheffield, the campaign is going out to local areas and involving tenants associations and community groups. The Council has set up a special campaign office. A detailed briefing for activists has been widely circulated. It is also realised that some services do not have the full support of either the users or the workers, so they are looking at ways to improve these

services for all concerned.

However, more traditional methods can also be used in City and County wide campaigns, e.g. posters, leaflets, badges, stickers, local meetings, workplace meetings, etc, aimed at:

- ★ showing who's really to blame;
- ★ highlighting the real work and value of local services;
- ★ countering the myths of central government.

Local councillors should be fully involved in the campaign and give all possible financial and practical support to a local campaign against rate-capping. Trade unions and councillors should work together with voluntary organisations to discuss the true nature of the crisis facing us, and to organise a campaign strategy.